













# A HISTORY OF INDIAN LITERATURE

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INTRODUCTION AND VEDA .

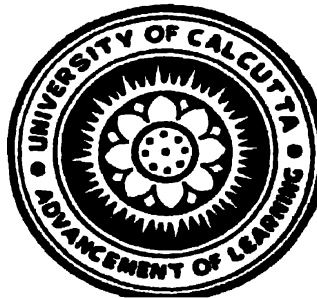
SECOND EDITION

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL GERMAN BY

MRS. S. KETKAR

AND REVISED BY THE AUTHOR

*Only Authorised Translation into English*



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**1898 B—June, 1959—AB**

**To**

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

**The Great Poet, Educator, and Lover of Man**

**This English Version of the ‘‘History of Indian Literature**

**is dedicated**

**as a token of loving admiration and sincere gratitude**

**by the Author**



## PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Both in Santiniketan, where I held the visiting professorship at Viśvabhāratī University in 1922-23, and elsewhere in India, I often heard expressions of regret that my 'History of Indian Literature', written in German, was not accessible to the majority of Indian students. I talked about this to some of my Indian friends, and one day Professor Taraporewala suggested that an English translation might be published by the University of Calcutta. He spoke about it to the late Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, the great champion and inspirer of Oriental Studies in Calcutta University, who at once showed great interest in the work, and at his suggestion the Syndicate of the University agreed to undertake the publication. It was not difficult to find a translator. When I came to Poona in November 1922, to visit the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, I was introduced to Dr. S. V. Ketkar, the learned Editor of the Marathi Encyclopædia, and to my great surprise he showed me two big volumes, containing a type-written English translation of the first two volumes of my 'History of Indian Literature'. The translation, I understood, was the work of Mrs. Ketkar, who had made it for the use of her husband, not for publication. Mrs. Ketkar, being German by her mother tongue, English by education, and Indian by marriage, seemed to me as if predestined for the work, and she agreed to revise and rewrite her translation for the purpose of publication.

But not only the translator had to revise her work, I myself had to revise mine. The first part of the German original, dealing with Vedic Literature, had been published in 1905, the second part, treating the Epic and Puranic literature, in 1908. It was, therefore, necessary to revise the whole work for the English translation, in order to bring it up to date. Many chapters had to be rewritten entirely, smaller changes, corrections and additions, had to be made almost on every page, and the more important publications of the last twenty years

had to be added to the references in the Notes. Thus this English translation is at the same time a second, revised and, I hope, improved edition of the original work.

It is not for me to say how far the translator has succeeded in her task. But I know that she has spared no pains to make her translation as accurate and as readable as possible. And for this it is my pleasant duty to thank her. I have also to thank my pupil Wilhelm Gampert for preparing the Index.

*Prague, Sept. 5th, 1926.*

M. WINTERNITZ

## PREFACE TO THE GERMAN EDITION

The publishers of this work have announced in a notice that the series in which the present volume, dedicated to the oldest period of Indian literature, appears, is intended, "not for learned circles, but for the educated people of the nation". With this idea in mind, the class of reader which I have kept constantly in view in the course of my work is the reader who as yet knows nothing of Indian literature, and possesses no special Indological knowledge of any kind:—and yet not that reader who merely desires a desultory acquaintance with Indian literature in a leisure hour,\* but him who wants to make himself as thoroughly acquainted with it as it is at all possible without a knowledge of the Indian languages. An English, German or French literary history need only be a bare presentation of the course of development of a literature which presumably is already familiar. A history of Indian literature, however, in all cases in which there are no German translations—and this is unfortunately so in the majority of cases—must also instruct the German reader as far as possible in the contents of the literary productions, by means of quotations and summaries of the contents. In other words: A history of the literature must be at the same time a description of the literature. Thus of the national epics and the Purāṇas, with which the second half of the present volume deals, only few portions have so far become known in German translations. Without extensive descriptive summaries and quotations it is impossible for the reader to gain any conception at all of the works treated.

In this way, indeed, the volume assumed larger proportions than it was originally anticipated. A second consideration also accounts for this increase in the size of the work. It is precisely the oldest Indian literature, treated in this volume, which, with reference to chronology, is to a certain



extent "hovering in the air". Not a single one of the numerous and extensive works which belong to the Vedas, to the national Epics, or to the Purāṇas, can be ascribed with certainty even to this or that century. It is simply impossible, in one sentence or in a few lines, to give information on the age of the Vedas, of the Mahābhārata, of the Rāmāyaṇa and even of the Purāṇas. Even for the general reader it is not sufficient to tell him that we do not know anything definite about the date of these works. It is necessary to mark off the boundaries within which our ignorance moves, and to state the grounds on which an approximate, even though only conjectural, date of these works is supported. Therefore considerable sections had to be devoted to the enquiry concerning the age of the Vedas, the Epics and the Pāraṇas. I emphasize expressly that these chapters, too, are not indeed written only for the specialist, but in the first place for the layman as characterised above, whom I had in view as my reader. If, notwithstanding, they contain something new for the specialist also,—and probably also some points which might challenge contradiction,—then it is because questions are here dealt with, which, just in recent years, have been the subject of new investigations, new discoveries, and manifold controversies.

The references given in the Notes are partly intended for the specialist, in whose eyes they are to justify the editor's standpoint in the most important debatable questions. For it is a matter of course, that a book which is addressed to the "educated people of the nation", must also stand before the judgment of the specialist, and submit entirely to the same. On the other hand, in the Notes intended for the non-specialist, I have also made a point of referring to all German translations which are accessible by any means—and where these are wanting, to the English and French ones. I have utilised these translations only in a few cases, in which they appeared to me to reproduce the original in a particularly admirable manner. Where no translator is mentioned, the translations are my own

• After what has been said, it will not be surprising that the originally intended size of *one* volume proved to be too

narrow for this Indian Literary History. I am sincerely thankful to the Publisher for raising no opposition to the reasons which were given for the widening of the originally planned size, and for giving his consent for a second volume. This widening also thoroughly corresponds with the extent and the significance of Indian literature,—for which I refer to the Introduction (p. 1 ff.). As the present volume deals in a certain sense with the “prehistoric” period of Indian literature,—at least in their beginnings, both the Vedas and the national epics reach back to far-off epochs which cannot be fixed by means of any dates—so the second volume shall begin with the Buddhist literature, and introduce the reader to the literature of the actually historical period of India.

Regarding the works upon which I have drawn and to which I am indebted, the Notes to the separate sections give information. What I owe to the “Akademische Vorlesungen über Indische Literaturgeschichte” by Albrecht Weber (2nd edition, Berlin 1876) which paved the way for Indian literary historiography, and to those stimulating and valuable lectures on “Indiens Literatur und Cultur in historischer Entwicklung” by Leopold v. Schroeder (Leipzig 1887) could naturally not be recorded in every single case. I also owe much, without always having specially mentioned it, to the valuable “Bulletins des Religions de l’Inde” by A. Barth in the *Revue de l’Histoire des Religions*, Tomes I, III, V, XI, XIV, XXVIII, XL, and XLV (1880-1902). The ingenious essays of H. Oldenberg, “Die Literatur des alten Indien” (Stuttgart and Berlin 1903) deal more with an aesthetic view and appreciation of Indian literature, which was somewhat outside the scope of my plans. The works of A. Baumgartner (*Geschichte der Weltliteratur II. Die Literaturen Indiens und Ostasiens*, 3. und 4. Aufl., Freiburg i. B. 1902), A. A. Macdonell (*A History of Sanskrit Literature*, London 1900) and V. Henry (*Les Littératures de l’Inde*, Paris 1904), though quite useful for their own purposes, hardly offered me anything new. The outlines of Indian literature by Richard Pischel in Part I, Section VII (“Die Orientalischen Literaturen”), of the series “Die Kultur der Gegenwart” (Berlin and Leipzig 1906), exceedingly short, but

a masterpiece in their brevity, appeared only when my MS. was already finished and partly printed. I would not wish to leave unmentioned the services rendered to me by the "Orientalische Bibliographie" by Lucian Scherman, which is so indispensable to every Orientalist. Finally, I express my sincere gratitude to all those who have written friendly reviews or offered expert criticism on the first half volume which appeared two years ago.

Prag, Kgl. Weinberge,  
15th October, 1907.

M. WINTERNITZ

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES

ABA = Abhandlungen der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philol.-histor. Klasse.

ABayA = Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil. Klasse.

AGGW = Abhandlungen der Königl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philol.-histor. Klasse.

AKM = Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, herausg. von der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

Album Kern = Album-Kern : Opstellen geschreven ter eere von Dr. H. Kern...op zijn zeventigsten verjaardag. Leiden 1903.

AMG = Annales du Musée Guimet (Paris).

Ann. Bh. Inst. = Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute, Poona.

ĀnSS = Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series (Poona).

AR = Archiv für Religionsgeschichte.

ASGW = Abhandlungen der philol.-histor. Klasse der Königl. Sächs. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften.

Aufrecht, Bodl. Cat. = Th. Aufrecht, Catalogus Codicum MSS. Sanscriticorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae, Oxonii 1859-64.

Aufrecht CC = Th. Aufrecht : Catalogus Catalogorum. Leipzig 1891 ; II, 1896 ; III, 1903.

Aufrecht, Leipzig = Katalog der Sanskrit-Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek zu Leipzig, 1901.

BEFEO = Bulletin de l'école française d'Extrême Orient.

BenSS = Benares Sanskrit Series.

Bezz. Beitr. = Beiträge zur Kunde der indogermanischen Sprachen, herausg. von A. Bezzenberger.

Bhandarkar, Report 1882-83 = R. G. Bhandarkar, Report on the Search for Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Bombay Presidency during the year 1882-83, Bombay 1884.

Bhandarkar, Report 1883-84 = R. G. Bhandarkar, Report etc. during the year 1883-84, Bombay 1887.

Bhandarkar Comm. Vol. = Commemorative Essays presented to Sir Ramkrishna Gopāl Bhandarkar, Poona 1917.

Bhandarkar, Vaiṣṇavism, etc. = R. G. Bhandarkar, Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems (Grundriss III, 6, 1913).

Bibl. Ind. = Bibliotheca Indica.

BSGW = Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königl. Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philol.-histor. Klasse.

BSOS = Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London Institution.

BSS = Bombay Sanskrit Series.

Bühler, Report = G. Bühler, Detailed Report of a Tour in Search of Sanskrit MSS. made in Kaśmir, Rajputana, and Central India. (Extra Number of the JBRAS 1877.)

Burnell, Tanjore = A. C. Burnell, A Classified Index to the Sanskrit MSS. in the Palace at Tanjore, London 1880.

Cambridge History = The Cambridge History of India, Vol. I. Ancient India. Ed. by E. J. Rapson, Cambridge 1922.

Deussen, AGPh = P. Deussen, Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie, I, 1—3, Leipzig 1894 (2nd. ed. 1906)-1908.

DLZ = Deutsche Literaturzeitung.

Ep. Ind. = Epigraphia Indica.

ERE = Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, edited by James Hastings.

Farquhar, Outline = J. N. Farquhar: An Outline of the Religious Literature of India, London 1920.

Festschrift Kuhn = Aufsätze zur Kultur-und Sprachgeschichte vornehmlich des Orients Ernst Kuhn...gewidmet... München 1916.

Festschrift Wackernagel = Antidoron, Festschrift Jacob Wackernagel zur Vollendung des 70. Lebensjahres, Göttingen 1924.

Festschrift Windisch = Festschrift Ernst Windisch zum 70. Geburtstag...dargebracht...Leipzig 1914.

GGA = Göttinger Gelehrte Anzeigen.

GOS = Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda.

Grundriss=Grundriss der indo-arischen Philologie und Altortumskunde.

GSAI=Giornale della Societa Asiatica Italiana.

Gurupūjākaumudī=Gurupūjākaumudī, Festgabe zum fünfzigjährigen Doctorjubiläum Albrecht Weber dargebracht von seinen Freunden und Schülern, Leipzig 1896.

Haraprasād, Report I, II.=Haraprasād Sāstrī, Report on the Search of Sanskrit MSS. (1895-1900), Calcutta 1901 and (1901-02 to 1905-06), Calcutta 1905.

HOS=Harvard Oriental Series, ed. by Ch. R. Lanman.

Ind. Hist. Qu.=The Indian Historical Quarterly, edited by Narendra Nath Law.

Ind. Ant.=Indian Antiquary.

Ind. Off. Cat.=Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Library of the India Office, London 1887 ff.

Ind. Stud.=Indische Studien, herausgegeben von A. Weber.

JA=Journal Asiatique.

JAOS=Journal of the American Oriental Society.

JASB=Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

JBRAS=Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

JRAS=Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

LZB=Literarisches Zentralblatt.

Mélanges Lévi=Mélanges d'Indianisme offerts par ses élèves à M. Sylvain Lévi...Paris 1911.

NGGW=Nachrichten von der Kgl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften Göttingen, Philolog.-histor. Klasse.

NSP=Nirṇaya Sāgara Press (Bombay).

OC=Transactions (Verhandlungen, Actes) of Congresses of Orientalists.

OTF=Oriental Translation Fund.

Pischel, KG=R. Pischel, Die indische Literatur, in Kultur der Gegenwart I, 7, 1906.

Proc. I (II, III) OC=Proceedings and Transactions of the First (Second, Third) Oriental Conference.

RHR=Revue de l'histoire des Religions, Paris.

RSO=Rivista degli studi orientali, Rome.

SBA=Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften.

SBAyA=Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wiss., Phil.-histor. Kl.

SBE=Sacred Books of the East (Oxford).

SBH=Sacred Books of the Hindus, published by the Panini Office, Allahabad.

Schroeder, ILC=L. von Schroeder, Indiens Literatur und Cultur, Leipzig 1887.

SIFI=Studi Italiani di Filologia Indo-Iranica.

Smith, Early History=Vincent A. Smith, The Early History of India. Fourth Edition, revised by S. M. Edwardes, Oxford 1924.

SWA=Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften.

TSS=Trivandrum Sanskrit Series.

Weber, HSS. Verz.=A. Weber, Verzeichnis der Sanskrit und Prakrit-Handschriften der K. Bibliothek zu Berlin.

Weber, HIL=A. Weber, History of Indian Literature, Fourth Edition, 1904, Popular Re-issue, 1914.

Winternitz-Keith, Bodl. Cat.=Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, vol. II begun by M. Winternitz, continued and completed by A. B. Keith, Oxford, 1905.

WZKM=Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes.

ZB=Zeitschrift für Buddhismus (Oskar Schloss, München).

ZDMG=Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

ZII=Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik, herausg. von der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

ZVV=Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde in Berlin.

**DIRECTIONS FOR PRONUNCIATION OF INDIAN (SANSKRIT,  
PRĀKRIT, PĀLI) NAMES AND WORDS, WRITTEN IN  
ROMAN CHARACTERS.**

*Pronounce :*

**Vowels.** { *a अ* as a "neutral vowel" like English "short u" in but.  
*ṛ ॠ* as a vowel, like *er* in Scots English *baker*.  
*e ए* } as long *ē* (in English *they*) and *ō* (in English *stone*),  
*o ओ* } without diphthongal character.

**Palatals.** { *c च* like *ch* in English *child*.  
*j ज* like *j* in English *just*.

**Cerebrals.** { *t ट*  
*th ठ*  
*d ड*  
*dh ढ*  
*n ण* } like English "dentals", while the Sanskrit dentals  
*(t त, th थ, d द, dh ध, n न)* are pronounced like  
dentals in Italian and French.

**Sibilants.** { *ś* (or *ṣ́, ś̌*) ष (palatal) } like *sh* in English *ship*.  
*ṣ ष* (cerebral)

**Nasals.** *ṅ ङ* (guttural) like *ng* in English *sing*.  
*ñ ण* (palatal) ,, *gn* in French *montagne*.  
*ṁ* (Anusvāra) ,, *n* in French *Jean*.  
*h* (Visarga) "a surd breathing, a final *h*-sound  
(in the European sense of *h*) uttered  
in the articulating position of the  
preceding vowel" (Whitney).





## INTRODUCTION

### EXTENT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIAN LITERATURE

The history of Indian literature is the history of the mental activity of at least 3,000 years, as expressed in speech and writing. The home of this mental activity which has been almost uninterruptedly continuous through thousands of years, is a land which reaches from the Hindukush to Cape Comorin and covers an area of one and a half millions of square miles, equalling in extent the whole of Europe with the exception of Russia,—a land which stretches from 8° to 35° N. Lat., that is, from the hottest regions of the Equator to well within the temperate zone. But the influence which this literature, already in ancient times, exerted over the mental life of other nations, reaches far beyond the boundaries of India to Further India, to Tibet, as far as China, Japan and Korea, and in the South over Ceylon and the Malay Peninsula far away over the islands of the Indian and the Pacific Oceans, while to the West the tracks of Indian mental life may be traced far into Central Asia to Eastern Turkestan, where, buried in the sands of the desert, Indian manuscripts have been found.

As regards its contents, Indian literature embraces everything which the word ' literature ' comprises in its widest sense : religious and secular, epic, lyric, dramatic and didactic poetry, as well as narrative and scientific prose.

In the foreground stands the religious literature. Not only the Brahmans in their Vedas and the Buddhists in their *Tiṭṭaka*, but also many others of the numerous religious sects, which have sprung up in India, can produce an enormous number of literary works—hymns, sacrificial songs, incantations, myths and legends, sermons, theological treatises, polemical writings, manuals of instruction on ritual and religious discipline. In this literature there is an accumulation of absolutely priceless material, which

no investigator of religion can afford to pass by. Besides this activity in the sphere of religious literature, which reaches back through thousands of years, and is still being continued at the present day, there have been in India since the oldest times also heroic songs, which in the course of centuries have become condensed into two great national epics—the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The poets of the Indian Middle Ages during centuries drew upon the legends of these two epics, and epic poems arose, which in contradistinction to these popular epics, are designated as—ornate epics. But, while these poems, on account of their exaggerated artificiality, which often exceeds all bounds, do not by any means always suit our Western taste, Indian poets have bequeathed to us lyrical and dramatic works, which bear comparison for delicacy and intensity of feeling, and partly also for dramatic creative power, with the most beautiful productions of modern European literature. In one department of literature, that of the aphorism (gnomic poetry), the Indians have attained a mastery which has never been gained by any other nation. India is also the land of the fairy-tale and fable. The Indian collections of fairy-tales, fables and prose narratives have played no insignificant part in the history of world-literature. Indeed, fairy-tale research—that most attractive study of fairy-tales and fairy-tale motives and of their wanderings from people to people—has only become an independent branch of knowledge through Benfey's fundamental work on the famous Indian book of fables, the *Pañcatantra*.

But one of the peculiarities of the Indian mind is that it has never drawn a distinct line between purely artistic production and scientific work, so that a division between *belles lettres* and didactic literature is not really possible in India. What appears to us a collection of fairy-tales and fables is regarded by the Indians as a manual of political and moral instruction. On the other hand, history and biography have in India never been treated other than by poets and as a branch of epic poetry. Neither does a division between the forms of poetry and prose really exist in India. Every subject can be treated equally well in verses as in the prose form. We find novels which differ from the ornate epics in hardly anything except that the metrical

form is wanting. Since the oldest times we find a special predilection for the mixture of prose and verse. For that which we call scientific literature, the prose form has been employed in India only for a small part, whereas verse has been used to a far greater extent. This is the case in works on philosophy and law, as also in those on medicine, astronomy, architecture, etc. Indeed, even grammars and dictionaries have been written by the Indians in metrical form. There is perhaps nothing more characteristic than that there exists a great classical epic in 22 Cantos, which pursues the definitely stated aim of illustrating and impressing the rules of grammar. Philosophy was very early a subject of literary activity in India, first in connection with the religious literature, but later also independently of the latter. Similarly, already in very early times, law and custom were,—also first in connection with religion,—made into subjects of a special law literature, written partly in verse and partly in prose. The importance of this law literature for the comparative study of law and social science is to-day appreciated to the full by prominent jurists and sociologists. Centuries before the birth of Christ, grammar was already studied in India, a science in which the Indians excel all the nations of antiquity. Lexicography, too, attains to a high age. The Indian court poets (Kavi) of later periods did not give utterance to that which a god revealed to them, but they studied the rules of grammar, and searched in dictionaries for rare and poetic expressions; they versified according to the teachings and rules which were laid down in scientific works on prosody and poetics. Since the earliest times the Indian mind had a particular predilection for detailed analysis and for the pedantic scientific treatment of all possible subjects. Therefore, we find in India not only an abundant, and partly ancient, literature on politics and economics, medicine, astrology and astronomy, arithmetic and geometry; but also music, singing, dancing and dramatic art, magic and divination, and even erotics, are arranged in scientific systems and treated in special manuals of instruction.

But in each single one of the above enumerated branches of literature there has accumulated, during the course of the centuries, a mass of literary productions which it is almost

impossible to survey, largely through the fact that in nearly all departments of religious literature, as well as of poetry and science, the commentators developed a very eager activity. Thus especially some of the most important and most extensive works on grammar, philosophy and law are only commentaries on older works. Very frequently other commentaries were again written on these commentaries. Indeed, it is not a rare thing for an author in India to have added a commentary to his own work. Thus, it is no matter for wonder, that the sum-total of Indian literature is almost overwhelming. And in spite of the fact that the catalogues of Indian MSS. which can be found in Indian and European libraries contain many thousands of book-titles and names of authors, innumerable works of Indian literature have been lost, and many names of older writers are known only through quotations by later writers, or have even completely disappeared.

All these facts—the high age, the wide geographical distribution, the extent, and the wealth, the aesthetic value and still more the value from the point of view of the history of culture, of Indian literature—would fully suffice to justify our interest in this great, original, and ancient literature. But there is something else in addition to this, which gives, just to Indian literature, a quite particular interest. The Indo-Aryan languages, together with the Iranian, form the most easterly branch of that great family of languages, to which also our language and indeed most of the languages of Europe belong, and which is called Indo-European. It was indeed this very literature of India, the investigation of which led to the discovery of this affinity of languages, a discovery which was so truly epoch-making, because it threw such an astonishing new light upon the pre-historic relations between the peoples. For, from the affinity of languages, one was forced to conclude that there was a former unity of languages, and this again presupposed a closer tie between the peoples speaking these Indo-European languages. There certainly are widespread and considerable errors concerning this relationship of the Indo-European peoples prevailing even to-day. People speak of an Indo-European ‘race,’ which does not exist at all, and never has existed. One also hears at

times that Indians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Germanic peoples and Slavs are of the same blood, descendants of one and the same Indo-European 'primitive stock'. These were far too hasty conclusions. But though it is even more than doubtful whether the peoples which speak Indo-European languages are all descended from a common origin, still it must not be doubted that a common language, this most important instrument of all mental activity, implies a relationship of mind and a common culture. Though the Indians are not flesh of our flesh, or bone of our bone, we may yet discover mind of our mind in the world of Indian thought. In order, however, to attain to a knowledge of the 'Indo-European mind', i.e. of that which may be called the Indo-European peculiarity in thought, reflection and poetry of these peoples, it is absolutely essential for the one-sided knowledge of the Indo-European character, which we have acquired by the study of European literatures, to be completed by an acquaintance with the Indo-European mind as evidenced in the distant East. It is for this reason that Indian literature, more especially, forms a necessary complement to the classical literature of Ancient Greece and Rome for all who would guard themselves against a one-sided view of the Indo-European character. Indian literature cannot, indeed, be compared with Greek literature in regard to artistic merit. The world of Indian thought has not, it is true, exercised by any means such an influence over modern European ideas as did Greek and Roman culture. But if we wish to learn to understand the beginnings of our own culture, if we wish to understand the oldest Indo-European culture, we must go to India, where the oldest literature of an Indo-European people is preserved. For whatever view we may adopt on the problem of the antiquity of Indian literature, we can safely say that the oldest monument of the literature of the Indians is at the same time the oldest monument of Indo-European literature which we possess.

Moreover, the immediate influence which the literature of India has exercised over our own literature, too, should not be underestimated. We shall see that the narrative literature of Europe is dependent on the Indian fable literature in no small degree. It is more especially German literature and German

philosophy which, since the beginning of the 19th century, have been greatly influenced by Indian ideas, and it is quite probable that this influence is still on the increase, and that it will be augmented still further in the course of the present century.

For that affinity of mind which is revealed to us in the unity of the Indo-European languages, is still clearly recognisable to-day, and nowhere so markedly as between Indians and Germans. The striking points of agreement between the German and Indian mind have often been pointed out.<sup>1</sup> "The Indians," says Leopold von Schroeder, "are the nation of romanticists of antiquity: the Germans are the romanticists of modern times." G. Brandes has already referred to the tendency towards contemplation and abstract speculation as well as to the inclination towards pantheism in the case of both Germans and Indians. Moreover, the German and the Indian character meet in many other respects, in a striking manner. It is not only German poets who have sung of 'Weltschmerz' (world-sorrow). 'Weltschmerz' is also the basic idea upon which the doctrine of Buddha is built up; and more than one Indian poet has lamented the suffering and woe of the world, the transitoriness and the vanity of all earthly things in words which remind us forcibly of our great poet of 'Weltschmerz,' Nikolaus Lenau. And when Heine says:

" Sweet is sleep, but death is better,  
Best of all is it never to be born,"

he expresses the same idea as those Indian philosophers, who aspire to nothing more ardently than to that death after which there is no further re-birth. Again, sentimentality and feeling for Nature are the common property of German and Indian poetry, whilst they are foreign, say, to Hebrew or Greek poetry. Germans and Indians love descriptions of Nature; and both Indian and German poets delight in connecting the joys and sorrows of man with the Nature which surrounds him. There

<sup>1</sup> Thus especially by G. Brandes, *Hauptströmungen der Literatur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, 1872, I, p. 270, and by Leopold von Schroeder, *Indiens Literatur und Cultur*, Leipzig, 1887, p. 6 f.

is yet another, quite different province, in which we encounter the similarity between Germans and Indians. Mention has already been made of the tendency of the Indians to work out scientific systems; and we are justified in saying that the Indians were the nation of scholars of antiquity, just as the Germans are the nation of scholars of to-day. In the earliest ages the Indians already analysed their ancient sacred writings with a view to philology, classified the linguistic phenomena as a scientific system, and developed their grammar so highly that even to-day modern philology can use their attainments as a foundation; likewise Germans of to-day are the undisputed leaders in all fields of philology and linguistic science.

In the field of Indian philology and in the research of Indian literature, too, the Germans have been the leaders and pioneers. Much as we are indebted to the English, who, as the rulers of India, took up the study of Indian language and literature as a result of practical needs, much as some prominent French, Italian, Dutch, Danish, American, Russian, and,—which should not be forgotten—native Indian scholars, have done for the investigation of Indian literature and culture,—the Germans have undoubtedly taken the lion's share in publishing critical editions of texts, explaining and investigating them, and in compiling dictionaries and grammars. A brief survey of the history of Indological studies will show us this.

### THE BEGINNINGS OF THE STUDY OF INDIAN LITERATURE IN EUROPE<sup>1</sup>

The enormous mass of Indian literary works, which to-day can hardly be surveyed by *one* investigator, has been made accessible for research only in the course of little more than a century.

Certainly already in the seventeenth, and still more in the eighteenth century, isolated travellers and missionaries acquired a certain knowledge of Indian languages, and made themselves acquainted with one or another of the works of Indian literature. But their efforts did not fall on fruitful soil. Thus in the year

<sup>1</sup> For this chapter see E. Windisch, *Geschichte der Sanskrit-Philologie und indischen Altertumskunde*, I, II (Grundriss I, 1, 1917 and 1920).



1651 the Dutchman Abraham Roger who had lived as a preacher in Paliacatta (Puliat) to the north of Madras, reported in his work *Open Door to the Hidden Heathendom*<sup>1</sup> on the ancient Brahmanical literature of the Indians, and published some of the Proverbs of Bhartṛhari, which had been translated into Portuguese for him by a Brahman, and which were drawn upon by Herder in later years for his *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern*. In the year 1699 the Jesuit Father Johann Ernst Hanxleden went to India and worked there for over thirty years in the Malabar Mission. He was himself conversant with Indian languages, and his *Grammatica Granthamia seu Sanscṛdumica* was the first Sanskrit Grammar written by a European. It was never printed, but was used by Fra Paolino de St. Bartholomeo. This Fra Paolino—an Austrian Carmelite, whose real name was J. Ph. Wessdin—is undeniably the most important of the missionaries who worked at the earliest opening-up of Indian literature. He was a missionary on the coast of Malabar from 1776 till 1789 and died in Rome in the year 1805. He wrote two Sanskrit Grammars and several learned treatises and books. His *Systema Brahmanicum* (Rome, 1792) and his *Reise nach Ostindien* (German by J. R. Forster, Berlin, 1798) show a great knowledge of India and the Brahmanical literature, as well as a deep study of Indian languages and especially of Indian religious thought. But yet his work too has left only faint traces behind.

At the same time, however, the English too had begun to concern themselves about the language and literature of the Indians. It was no less a person than Warren Hastings, the actual founder of British rule in India, from whom emanated the first fruitful stimulus for the study of Indian literature, which has never since been interrupted. He had recognised, what the English since then have never forgotten, that the sovereignty of England in India would be secure only if the rulers understood how to treat the social and religious prejudices of the natives with all possible consideration. At his instigation, therefore, a

<sup>1</sup> The book appeared in Dutch in 1651 (*Open-Deure tot het verborgene Heydendom*, in 1915 newly edited by W. Caland), and in a German translation in Nürnberg in 1669.

resolution was incorporated in the law which was to regulate the Government of India, to the effect that native scholars should attend the legal proceedings in order to make it possible for the English judges in India to consider the statutes of Indian law-books at the formulation of the verdicts. And when, in the year 1773, Warren Hastings was nominated as the Governor-General of Bengal and entrusted with the highest powers over the whole of the English possessions in India, he had a work compiled by a number of Brahmans, versed in the law, out of the ancient Indian law-books, under the title of *Vivādārṇavasetu* (' Bridge over the Ocean of Disputes ') containing everything important about the Indian law of inheritance, family law, and such like. When the work was finished, no one could be found who was capable of translating it directly from Sanskrit into English. It, therefore, had to be translated from Sanskrit into Persian, from which it was translated into English by Nathaniel Brassey Halhed. This translation was printed at the expense of the East India Company in the year 1776 under the title *A Code of Gentoo<sup>1</sup> Law*.

The first Englishman who acquired a knowledge of Sanskrit was Charles Wilkins, who had been urged by Warren Hastings to take instruction from the Pandits in Benares, the chief seat of Indian learning. As the first-fruits of his Sanskrit studies he published in the year 1785 an English translation of the philosophical poem *Bhagavadgītā*, which was the first time a Sanskrit book had been translated directly into a European language. Two years later there followed a translation of the book of fables, *Hitopadeśa*, and in 1795 a translation of the *Śakuntalā* episode from the *Mahābhārata*. For his Sanskrit Grammar, which appeared in 1808, Sanskrit type was used for the first time in Europe, a type which he himself had carved and cast. He was also the first who occupied himself with Indian inscriptions and translated some of them into English.

However, still more important for the opening-up of large departments of Indian literature was the work of the famous

<sup>1</sup> A German translation appeared in Hamburg in 1778. *Gentoo* is the Anglo-Indian form of the Portuguese *gentio*, 'heathen,' and is used to designate the Indian 'heathens', i.e. the Hindus, in contradistinction to the Mohammedans.

English orientalist William Jones<sup>1</sup> (born 1746, died 1794), who went to India in the year 1783 in order to take up the post of Chief Justice at Fort William. Jones had already in his youth occupied himself with oriental poetry, and translated Arabic and Persian poems into English. No wonder that, when he arrived in India, he transferred his enthusiasm to the study of Sanskrit and Indian literature. Already a year after his arrival in India he became the founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, which soon displayed an extraordinarily useful activity in the publication of periodicals, and especially in the printing of numerous editions of Indian texts. In the year 1789 he published his English translation of the celebrated drama *Śakuntalā* by Kālidāsa. This English translation was translated into German in the year 1791 by George Forster, and awakened in the highest degree the enthusiasm of men like Herder and Goethe. Another work of the same poet Kālidāsa, the lyric poem *Rtusamhāra*, was published in the original text by Jones in Calcutta in the year 1792, and this was the first Sanskrit text which appeared in print. Of still greater importance was the fact that Jones translated into English the most famous and most reputed work of Indian legal literature, the law-book of Manu. This translation appeared in Calcutta in 1794 under the title *Institutes of Hindu Law, or the Ordinance of Manu*. A German translation of this book appeared in 1797 in Weimar. Finally, Jones was also the first who affirmed the certain genealogical connection of Sanskrit with Greek and Latin and its hypothetical connection with German, Celtic and Persian. He had already also pointed out the similarities between the ancient Indian and the Graeco-Roman mythology.

While the enthusiastic W. Jones, through the enthusiasm with which he brought to light Indian literary treasures, was primarily stimulating, the sober Henry Thomas Colebrooke, who continued the work of W. Jones, became the real founder of Indian philology and archaeology. Colebrooke had entered on his official career in Calcutta in 1782 as a youth of seventeen

<sup>1</sup> William Jones was not only a learned and enthusiastic Orientalist, but also the first Anglo-Indian poet. He composed suggestive hymns to Brahman, Nārāyaṇa, Lakṣmī, etc.; cf. E. F. Oaten, *A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature*, London, 1908, pp. 19 ff.

years, without troubling himself during the first eleven years of his sojourn in India about Sanskrit and Sanskrit literature. But when W. Jones died in 1794 Colebrooke had just learnt Sanskrit and had undertaken to translate from Sanskrit into English, under Jones' guidance, a composition, prepared by native scholars, on the law of succession and contract, from the Indian law-books. This translation appeared in 1797 and 1798 under the title *A Digest of Hindu Law on Contracts and Successions* in four folio volumes. From that time he devoted himself with untiring zeal to the investigation of Indian literature. His interest, contrary to that of Jones, lay not so much in the poetic as in the scientific literature. Therefore, we are indebted to him not only for further works on Indian law, but also for pioneer essays on philosophy and religious life, on grammar, astronomy and the arithmetic of the Indians. Moreover, it was he who, in the year 1805, in the now famous essay, *On the Vedas*, was the first to give definite and reliable information about the ancient sacred books of the Indians.<sup>1</sup> He was also the editor of the *Amarakoṣa* and other Indian dictionaries, of the famous grammar of Pāṇini, of the *Hitopadeśa*, and of the epic poem *Kirātārjunīya*. Further, he is the author of a Sanskrit grammar, and edited and translated a number of inscriptions. Finally, he amassed an exceedingly diversified collection of Indian manuscripts, which are supposed to have cost him about £10,000, and which, after his return to England, he presented to the East India Company. This collection of manuscripts is to-day one of the most valuable treasures of the library of the India Office in London.

Among the Englishmen who, like Jones and Colebrooke, learned Sanskrit at about the close of the eighteenth century, was Alexander Hamilton. The latter returned to Europe in

<sup>1</sup> The alleged translation of the *Yajurveda* which appeared in the year 1778 in French under the title *Exour-vedam* and in 1779 also in German, is a falsification, a pious fraud, which used to be ascribed to the missionary Roberto de 'Nobili'. But W. Caland, Th. Zachariæ (GGA 1921, p. 157), and others deny, that he was the author of the fraud. Voltaire received this alleged translation from the hands of an official returning from Pondicherry and presented it to the Royal Library in Paris in 1761. Voltaire regarded the book as an old commentary on the Veda, which had been translated by a venerable centenarian Brahman into French, and he frequently refers to the *Exour-Vedam* as an authority for Indian antiquities. Already in the year 1782 Sonpéat declared the book to be a falsification. (A. W. Schlegel, *Indische Bibliothek*, II, pp. 50 ff.).

1802, travelling through France, and stayed for a short time in Paris. An event then happened, which, though unpleasant for himself, was extraordinarily favourable for Sanskrit learning. Just at that time the hostilities between France and England, which had been interrupted only for a short time by the Peace of Amiens, broke out anew and Napoleon issued a command that all English people who were in France when war broke out should be prevented from returning to their homes, and be detained in Paris. Alexander Hamilton was among these Englishmen. But, in the year 1802 the German poet Friedrich Schlegel<sup>1</sup> had also just come to Paris to stay there, except for a few intervals, till the year 1807, just during the time of A. Hamilton's involuntary sojourn. In Germany attention had for a long time already been drawn to the efforts of English scholars. Especially the above-mentioned translation of *Sakuntalā* by W. Jones had attracted much attention, and had been immediately (1791) translated into German. In the years 1795-97 W. Jones's treatises had already appeared in a German translation. Also Jones's translation of *Manu's Law-Book* had been rendered into German already in the year 1797. The books of Fra Paolino de St. Bartholomeo too did certainly not remain unnoticed in Germany. Above all, however, it was the Romantic School, headed by the brothers Schlegel, for which Indian literature had a special attraction. It was indeed the time when people began to become enthusiastic about foreign literatures. Herder had already frequently directed the attention of the Germans to the Orient by means of his *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (1778) and his *Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-91). It was the Romanticists, however, who threw themselves with the greatest enthusiasm into everything strange and distant, and who felt themselves most especially attracted by India. From India one expected, as Friedrich Schlegel said, nothing less than "the unfolding of the history of the primeval world which up till now is shrouded in darkness: and lovers of poetry hoped, especially since the appearance of the *Sakuntala* to glean thence

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. F. J. Remy, *The Influence of India and Persia on the Poetry of Germany*, New York, 1901, and P. Th. Hoffmann, *Der indische und der deutsche Geist von Herder bis zur Romantik* Diss., Tübingen, 1915.

many similar beautiful creations of the Asiatic spirit, animated, as in this case, by grace and love." No wonder, therefore, that, when he made the acquaintance of Alexander Hamilton in Paris, Friedrich Schlegel at once seized the opportunity of learning Sanskrit from him. In the years 1803 and 1804 he had the advantage of his instruction and the remaining years of his stay in Paris he employed in study in the Paris Library, which already at that time contained about two hundred Indian manuscripts.<sup>1</sup> As the result of these studies there appeared in the year 1808 that book through which Friedrich Schlegel became the founder of Indian philology in Germany, namely, *Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier. Ein Beitrag zur Begründung der Altertumskunde*. This book was written with enthusiasm and was suitable for awakening enthusiasm. It contained also translations of some passages from the *Rāmāyana*, from *Manu's Law-Book*, from the *Bhagavadgītā*, and from the *Śakuntalā*-episode of the *Mahābhārata*. These were the first direct translations from Sanskrit into German; for what had previously been known of Indian literature in Germany, had been translated from the English.

While Friedrich Schlegel's work was chiefly stimulating, it was his brother August Wilhelm von Schlegel who was the first in Germany to develop an extensive activity as a Sanskrit scholar by means of editions of texts, translations, and other philological works. He was also the first Professor of Sanskrit in Germany, in which capacity he was called to the newly-founded University of Bonn in the year 1818. Like his brother, he too had begun his Sanskrit studies in Paris, namely, in the year 1814. His teacher was a Frenchman, A. L. Chézy, the first French scholar to learn and teach Sanskrit; he was also the first Sanskrit Professor at the Collège de France, and has rendered valuable services as an editor and translator of Indian works. In the year 1823 appeared the first volume of the periodical *Indische Bibliothek* founded and almost entirely written by August Wilhelm von Schlegel, containing numerous essays on Indian philology. In the same year he published also

<sup>1</sup> A catalogue of these was published by Alexander Hamilton in Paris, 1807 (in conjunction with L. Langlès, who translated Hamilton's notes into French).

a good edition of the *Bhagavadgītā* with a Latin translation, while in the year 1829 appeared the first part of Schlegel's most important work, his unfinished edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

A contemporary of August Wilhelm von Schlegel was Franz Bopp, who was born in 1791, went to Paris in 1812, in order to devote himself to the study of Oriental languages, and there learned Sanskrit from Chézy, together with Schlegel. But while the brothers Schlegel, as romantic poets, were enthusiastic over India, and took up their work in Indian literature as a kind of adventure,<sup>1</sup> Bopp joined these studies as a thoroughly sober investigator, and it was he who became the founder of a new science, Comparative Philology, which was destined to so great a future,—and this by means of his book, published in 1816, *Ueber das Conjugations-system der Sanskritsprache in Vergleichung mit jenem der griechischen, lateinischen, persischen und germanischen Sprache*. In the investigation of Indian literature, too, Bopp has rendered invaluable services. Already in his *Conjugations-system* he gave as an appendix some episodes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* in metrical translations from the original text, besides some extracts from the Vedas after Colebrooke's English translation. With rare skill he then singled out of the great epic *Mahābhārata* the wonderful story of King Nala and his faithful wife Damayantī, and made it universally accessible by means of a good critical edition with a Latin translation.<sup>2</sup> It is just this one, out of the countless episodes of the *Mahābhārata*, which most completely forms a separate whole, and not only is one of the most beautiful portions of the great epic, but also, as one of the most charming creations of Indian poetic art, is most peculiarly suitable for

<sup>1</sup> Thus Friedrich Schlegel writes in a letter to Goethe that he has set himself the task "of bringing to light that which has been forgotten and unappreciated," and, therefore, had turned from Dante to Shakespeare, to Petrarch and Calderon, to the old German heroic songs, "In this manner I had to a certain extent exhausted the European literature, and turned to Asia in order to seek a new adventure" (A. Hillebrandt, *Alt-Indien* Breslau, 1899, p. 87). Aug. Wilh. von Schlegel also writes (*Indische Bibliothek*, p. 8) that he desires, by means of his essays, to point the way to a certain extent for those of his compatriots "who wish to taste the adventure (for an adventure it remains after all)".

<sup>2</sup> *Nalus, Carmen Sanskritum e Mahabharato*, edidit, latine vertit et annotationibus illustravit Franciscus Bopp. London, 1819.

awakening enthusiasm for Indian literature, and love for the study of Sanskrit. It has, in fact, become almost traditional at all Western Universities where Sanskrit is taught, to select the Nala-episode as the first reading for the students, for which purpose it is especially suitable also on account of the simplicity of the language. A number of other episodes from the *Mahābhārata*, too, were published for the first time and translated into German by Bopp. His Sanskrit Grammars (1827, 1832 and 1834) and his *Glossarium Sanscritum* (Berlin 1830) have done very much to further the study of Sanskrit in Germany.

It was fortunate for the young science of comparative philology and for the study of Sanskrit, which was then still for a long time connected with it, that the ingenious, versatile and influential Wilhelm von Humboldt showed enthusiasm for these studies. In the year 1821 he began to learn Sanskrit because, as he once wrote in a letter to Aug. Wilh. von Schlegel,<sup>1</sup> he had perceived "that without as thorough as possible a study of Sanskrit, very little can be accomplished either in philology or in that kind of history which is connected with it". And when Schlegel, in the year 1828, took a retrospect of Indian studies, he emphasized as particularly fortunate for the new science the fact that it "had found a warm friend and patron in Herrn Wilhelm von Humboldt". Schlegel's edition of the *Bhagavadgītā* had directed Humboldt's attention to this theological poem. He devoted special treatises to it, and at the time he wrote to Fr. von Gentz (1827): "It is perhaps the deepest and loftiest thing the world has to show." Later, in 1828, when he sent to his friend his work on the *Bhagavadgītā*, which had in the meantime been criticized by Hegel, he wrote that, however indifferent he might be to Hegel's judgment, he greatly valued the Indian philosophical poem. "I read the Indian poem," he writes, "for the first time in the country in Silesia, and my constant feeling while doing so was gratitude to Fate for having permitted me to live long enough to become acquainted with this book."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Indische Bibliothek*, I, p. 433.

<sup>2</sup> *Schriften von Friedrich von Gentz, Herausgegeben von Gustav Schlesier*, Mannheim, 1840, Vol. V, pp. 291 and 300.



Yet another great hero of German literature remains to be mentioned, who fortunately for our science, had enthusiasm for Indian poetry. This is the German poet Friedrich Rückert, the incomparable master of the art of translation. Of the loveliest gems of Indian epics and lyrics there is indeed much which

“ Rustled thousands of years ago  
In the tops of Indian palms,”

and which, through him, has become the common property of the German people.<sup>1</sup>

Till the year 1830 it was almost entirely the so-called classical Sanskrit literature which occupied the attention of European students. The drama *Śakuntalā*, the philosophic poem *Bhagavadgītā*, the *Law-Book of Manu*, the proverbs of Bhartṛhari, the fable-book *Hitopadeśa*, and selected portions of the great epics: these were practically the chief works with which research was occupied, and which were regarded as the original stock of Indian literature. The great and all-important province of Indian literature, the Veda, was almost entirely unknown, and of the whole of the great Buddhist literature nothing at all was known as yet. The little that was known of the Vedas up till the year 1830 was limited to meagre and incomplete information from the older writers on India. The first reliable information was given by Colebrooke in his above-mentioned treatise on the Vedas in 1805.<sup>2</sup> Comparatively more was known about the Upaniṣads, the philosophic treatises belonging to the Vedas. These Upaniṣads had been translated in the 17th century into Persian by the brother of Aurangzeb, the unfortunate Prince Mohammed-Dara Shakoh,<sup>3</sup> the son of the

<sup>1</sup> Rückert's translations from Indian classical poetry have been re edited by H. von Glasenapp, *Indische Liebeslyrik*, München, 1921.

<sup>2</sup> *Miscellaneous Essays*, Madras, 1872, pp. 9 ff. A German translation was published in 1847. For the beginnings of Vedic research, see W. Caland, *De Ontdekkings geschiedenis van den Veda*, Amsterdam, 1918, and Th. Zachariæ, GGA., 1921, pp. 148 ff. (English in the *Journal of Indian History*, May, 1928.)

<sup>3</sup> The fate of this prince forms the subject of a beautiful, unfortunately too little known tragedy by L. von Schroeder, *Dara oder Schah Dschehn und seine Söhne* (Mittau 1891).

Great Mogul Shah Jehan. From the Persian they were translated into Latin at the beginning of the 19th century by the French scholar Anquetil du Perron<sup>1</sup> under the title *Oupnek'hat*.<sup>2</sup> Imperfect and full of misinterpretations as the Latin translation was, it has become of importance for the history of learning, through the fact that the German philosophers Schelling, and especially Schopenhauer, became enthusiastic for Indian philosophy by means of this book. It was not the Upaniṣads as we know and explain them now with all the material of Indian philology now accessible to us and our more definite knowledge of the whole philosophy of the Indians, but the *Oupnek'hat*, that absolutely imperfect Perso-Latin translation of Anquetil du Perron, which Schopenhauer declared to be 'the production of the highest human wisdom'. At the same time as Schopenhauer in Germany was putting more of his own philosophical ideas into the Upaniṣads of the Indians than he gleaned from them, there lived in India one of the wisest and noblest men that this land has produced, Rāmmohun Roy, the founder of the 'Brāhmo Samāj' (a new religious community which sought to unite the best of the European religions with the faith of the Hindus), an Indian who, out of the same Upaniṣads, gleaned the purest faith in God, and out of them tried to prove to his countrymen that, although the idolatry of the present Indian religions is objectionable, yet the Indians, therefore, need not embrace Christianity, but could find a pure religion in their own sacred writings, in the old Vedas, if they only understood them. With the object of revealing this new teaching, new though already contained in the ancient scrip-

<sup>1</sup> Anquetil du Perron, too, was among those who were inspired by the Upaniṣads, and was himself a kind of Indian ascetic. See E. Windisch, *Die altindischen Religionsurkunden und die christliche Mission*, Leipzig, 1897, p. 15, and *Geschichte der Sanskrit-Philologie*, pp. 48 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The complete title is : *Oupnek'hat i.e. secretum tegendum, opus ipsa in India rarissimum, continens antiquam et arcanam s. theologicam, et philosophicam doctrinam e quatuor sacris Indorum libris, Rak Beid, Djedir Beid, Sam Beid, Athrban Beid excerptam : ad verbum e persico idiomate, Sanscetricis vocabulis intermixto in latinum conversum . . . studio et opéra, Anquetil du Perron . . .*, Parisiis, 1801-02, 4, 2 Vol.

Partly translated into German, Nürnberg, 1808. *Oupnek'hat* is a corruption of Upaniṣad and *Rak Beid*, etc., are corruptions of *Rgveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Sāmaveda* and *Atharvaveda*.

tures, and causing it to be propagated by means of the religious community founded by him, the Brāhmo Samāj, or the ' Church of God ', and also with the purpose of proving to the Christian theologians and missionaries whom he esteemed highly, that the best of that which they taught was already contained in the Upaniṣads,—he translated in the years 1816-19, a considerable number of Upaniṣads into English, and published a few of these in the original.<sup>1</sup>

The actual philological investigation of the Vedas, however, began only in the year 1838, with the edition, published in London, of the first eighth of the *Rgveda*, by Friedrich Rosen, who was only prevented by his premature death from completing his edition. But, above all, it was the great French orientalist Eugène Burnouf, who taught at the Collège de France in the early forties of the nineteenth century, and who, by gathering around him a circle of pupils who afterwards became prominent Vedic scholars, laid the foundation of the study of the Vedas in Europe. One of these pupils was Rudolph Roth, who originated the study of the Vedas in Germany by his book *Zur Litteratur und Geschichte des Weda* (On the literature and history of the Veda) published in 1846. Roth himself and a goodly number of his pupils devoted themselves in the following years and decades with a burning zeal to the investigation of the various branches of this, India's oldest literature. Another celebrated pupil of Burnouf was F. Max Müller, who had been initiated into the study of the Vedas by Burnouf at the same time as Roth. Stimulated by Burnouf, Max Müller formed the project of publishing the hymns of the *Rgveda* with the great commentary of Sāyana. This edition, essential for all further research, appeared in the years 1849-75.<sup>2</sup> Before this was yet completed, Th. Aufrecht had rendered invaluable services to these investigations, by his handy edition of the complete text of the hymns of the *Rgveda* (1861-63).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Smaller fragments of the Upaniṣads appeared also in Othmar Frank's *Chrestomathia Sanscrita* (1820-21) and in his *Vyāsa, über Philosophie, Mythologie, Literatur und Sprache der Hindu* (1826-30).

<sup>2</sup> A second improved edition was published in 1890-92.

<sup>3</sup> A second edition of Aufrecht's text of the hymns of the *Rgveda* was published in Bonn, 1877.

The same Eugène Burnouf who had stood by the cradle of Veda study, had also, by the *Essai sur le Pali* published in 1826 in conjunction with Lassen, and by his *Introduction à l'histoire du Bouddhisme Indien* laid the foundation of the study of Pāli, and the investigation of Buddhist literature.

With the conquest of this great department of Veda literature, and with the opening-up of the literature of Buddhism, the history of the infancy of Indology has reached its end. It has grown into a great department of learning, in which the number of collaborators increases year by year. Now rapidly, one after the other, appear critical editions of the most important texts, and scholars of all countries strive in noble emulation to interpret them.<sup>1</sup> What has been done in the last decades in the different provinces of Indian literature, will have to be mentioned for the most part in the separate chapters of this history of literature. Here only the principal stages on the path of Indology, the most important events in its history can be briefly mentioned.

Above all, mention must be made of a pupil of A. W. v. Schlegel, Christian Lassen, who tried to gather together the whole of the contemporary knowledge about India, in his *Indische Alterthumskunde* which, planned on a large scale, began to appear in the year 1843 and comprised four thick volumes, the last of which appeared in 1862. The fact that this book is obsolete already to-day is not the fault of the author, but a brilliant proof of the colossal progress which our science has made in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The most powerful lever, however, for this progress, and perhaps the chief event in the history of Sanskrit research was the appearance of the *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch* (Sanskrit Dictionary) compiled by Otto Böhtlingk and Rudolph Roth, published by the Academy of Arts and Sciences in St. Petersburg. The first part of this appeared in the year 1852, and in the year 1875 the work was complete in seven folio volumes—a brilliant monument to German industry.

<sup>1</sup> As early as 1823, A. W. v. Schlegel said very pertinently: "Will the English perhaps claim a monopoly of Indian literature? It would be too late. Cinnamon and cloves they may keep; but these mental treasures are the common property of the educated world." (*Ind. Bibl.* I, 15.)

In the same year 1852, in which the great St. Petersburg Dictionary began to appear, Albrecht Weber made an attempt for the first time to write a complete history of Indian Literature. The work appeared under the title *Akademische Vorlesungen über indische Literaturgeschichte*. A second edition appeared in 1876,<sup>1</sup> and it indicates not only a milestone in the history of Indology, but it has remained, in spite of its defects in style, which make it unpalatable for the general reader, for decades the most reliable and most complete handbook of Indian Literature.

However, if one desires to get an idea of the truly astonishing progress which the investigation of Indian literature has made in the comparatively short duration of its existence, then one should read A. Wilh. v. Schlegel's essay, written in the year 1819, *Ueber den gegenwärtigen Zustand der Indischen Philologie* (On the present condition of Indian philology), in which not many more than a dozen Sanskrit books<sup>2</sup> are enumerated as having been made known through editions or translations. Next one should glance at Friedrich Adelung's book, which appeared in the year 1830 in St. Petersburg, *Versuch einer Literatur der Sanskrit-Sprache* (A Study on the literature of the Sanskrit language<sup>3</sup>) in which already the titles of over 350 Sanskrit books are mentioned. One should then compare with it Weber's *Indische Literaturgeschichte* which in the year 1852 (according to an approximate estimate), discusses close on 500 works of Indian literature. Then one should look at the *Catalogus Catalogorum* published by Theodor Aufrecht in the years 1891, 1896 and 1903, which contains an alphabetical list of all Sanskrit works and authors, based on the investigation of all the available catalogues of manuscripts. In this monumental work, at which Aufrecht worked for over forty years, all the catalogues of Sanskrit manuscripts of all the important libraries of India and Europe are incorporated, and the number of available Sanskrit books in this *Catalogus Catalogorum* runs into many thousands. Yet this catalogue does not include

<sup>1</sup> An English translation of Weber's *History of Indian Literature* appeared in Trübner's Oriental Series.

<sup>2</sup> This is rather a bibliography than a history of literature. About 230 edited texts are mentioned by J. Gildemeister, *Bibliotheca Sanskrita sive recensio librorum Sanskritorum*. . . . Specimen Bonnæ ad Rh., 1847.

the whole of the Buddhist literature, and all the literary works which were written in other Indian languages and not in Sanskrit. And how many new works have been discovered since 1903!

The investigation of Buddhist literature has been greatly furthered by the "Pali Text Society" founded in the year 1882 by T. W. Rhys Davids. Albrecht Weber, again, with his great treatise *Ueber die heiligen Schriften der Jaina*<sup>1</sup> (1883-85) (on the sacred writings of the Jains) has opened up for science another great branch of literature, the writings of the Jains, a sect equal in antiquity to Buddhism.

So much indeed has the amount of Indian Literature, which has become known, gradually increased, that nowadays it is hardly possible any more for *one* scholar to master all the provinces of the same, and that the necessity arose for giving in one work an encyclopaedic view of everything which has, up till now, been done in the separate branches of Indology. For this work which has been appearing since the year 1897<sup>2</sup> under the title *Grundriss der indo-arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde* (Encyclopaedia of Indo-aryan Philology and Archaeology) the plan was drawn up by Georg Bühler, the greatest and most versatile Sanskrit scholar of the last decades. Thirty scholars from Germany, Austria, England, Holland, India and America banded themselves together, in order to compile the separate parts of this work, first under the editorship of Bühler—afterwards under that of Franz Kielhorn and now under that of H. Lüders and J. Wackernagel. The publication of this *Grundriss* is at one and the same time the latest and most welcome, as well as most important, event in the history of the development of Indology. If we wish to compare the knowledge of India and its literature as laid down in the volumes of this *Grundriss* which have appeared up till now, with that which Lassen was able to record in his *Indische Altertumskunde* only a few decades before, then we can look with just pride at the progress which science has made in a comparatively short period of time.

<sup>1</sup> *Indische Studien*, Vols. 16 and 17.

<sup>2</sup> Published by Karl J. Trübner in Strassburg, now Vereinigung wissenschaftlicher Verleger Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin and Leipzig.

## THE CHRONOLOGY OF INDIAN LITERATURE

*Much as has been done with regard to the opening-up of Indian literature, yet its actual history is still to a great extent wrapped in darkness and unexplored. Above all, the chronology of the history of Indian literature is shrouded in truly terrifying darkness, and most of the riddles still remain to be solved by research. It would be so pleasant, so convenient, and, especially for a handbook, so desirable if one could divide Indian literature into three or four periods, separated by definite dates, and place the different literary productions in one or the other of these periods. But every attempt of such a kind is bound to fail in the present state of knowledge, and the use of hypothetical dates would only be a delusion, which would do more harm than good. It is much better to recognise clearly the fact that for the oldest period of Indian literary history we can give no certain dates, and for the later periods only a few. Years ago the celebrated American Sanskrit scholar W. D. Whitney<sup>1</sup> gave utterance to these words which since then have often been repeated: "All dates given in Indian literary history are pins set up to be bowled down again." For the most part this is still the case to-day. Even to-day the views of the most important investigators with regard to the age of the most important Indian literary works, differ, not indeed by years and decades, but by whole centuries, if not even by one or two thousands of years. What can be determined with some certainty, is at most only a kind of relative chronology. We can often say: this or that book, this or that class of literature is older than a certain other; however, with regard to its real age it is only possible to offer hypotheses. The surest mark of differentiation for this relative chronology still lies in the language. Less reliable are peculiarities of style; for it has often happened in India that later works have imitated the style of an older class of literature, in order to assume an appearance of antiquity. Often, indeed, also the relative chronology is spoiled, because many works of Indian literature, and just those which were the most popular, and therefore, are the most important for us, have suffered manifold revisions,*

<sup>1</sup> In the Introduction to his *Sanskrit Grammar*, Leipzig, 1870 (second edition, 1899).

and have come to us in various modifications. If we find, for example, the *Rāmāyaṇa* or the *Mahābhārata* quoted in a book, the date of which can even only approximately be fixed, then the question always arises first, whether this quotation refers to the epics as we have them at present, or to the older versions of the same. Still greater does the uncertainty become through the fact that, of the majority of the works of the older literature, the authors' names are as good as unknown to us. They are handed down to us as the works of families, of schools, or monastic communities, or a mythical seer of primitive times is named as the author. When at last, we come to a time where we have to deal with the works of quite definite individual writers, then these are, as a rule, only mentioned by their family names with which the literary historian of India knows as little what to do, as probably a German literary historian with the names Meier, Schultze or Müller, when these are given without a first name. If, for example, a book under the name of Kālidāsa, or the name of Kālidāsa is mentioned anywhere, then it is by no means certain that the great poet of this name is meant, it can equally well be another Kālidāsa.<sup>1</sup>

In this ocean of uncertainty there are only a few fixed points, which, in order not to tighten the reader too much, I would like to mention here.

There is, above all, the evidence of language, which proves that the hymns and songs, prayers and magic formulas of the Veda, are indisputably the oldest which we possess of Indian literature. Further, it is certain that Buddhism arose in India about 500 years before Christ, and that it presupposes the whole Vedic literature, as represented by its chief works, as practically finished, so that one can assert: The Vedic literature apart from its latest excrescences is on the whole pre-Buddhist, i.e. it was concluded before 500 B.C. Also, the chronology of the Buddhist and Jain literature is fortunately not quite so uncertain as that of the Brahmanical literature. The traditions of the

<sup>1</sup> The history of Indian literature encounters an additional difficulty in the frequent occurrence of the same name in different forms, and in the circumstance that one and the same author often has two or several different names, as name synonyms and abbreviations of names are very general in India; Cf. R. O. Franke, *Indische Genealogien*, pp. 57 ff. and GGA. 1892, pp. 482 ff.



*Buddhists and the Jains with regard to the formation, or rather the collection, of their canonical works, have proved themselves fairly trustworthy, and inscriptions on the preserved ruins of temples and topes of these religious sects give us appreciable indications of the history of their literature.*

However, the safest dates of Indian history are those which we do not get from the Indians themselves. Thus, the invasion of Alexander the Great in India, in the year 326 B.C., is a certain date, which is of importance for Indian literary history, also, especially when it is the question whether, in any literary work or class of literature, Greek influence should be assumed. From the Greeks we also know that, about 315 B.C. Candragupta, the Sandrakottos of the Greek writers, conducted successfully the revolt against the prefects of Alexander, took possession of the throne, and became the founder of the Maurya dynasty in Pāṭaliputra (the Palibōthra of the Greeks, the present Patna). It was at about the same time, or a few years later, that the Greek Megasthenes was sent by Seleukos as ambassador to the court of Candragupta. The fragments which have been preserved of the description of India, written by him, give us a picture of the state of Indian culture at that time, and enable us to draw conclusions as to the dates of several Indian literary works. A grandson of Candragupta is the celebrated King Aśoka, who was crowned about 264 B.C.,<sup>1</sup> and from whom originate the oldest dateable Indian inscriptions which have been found up to the present. These inscriptions, partly on rocks, partly on pillars, are the oldest evidences of Indian script which we possess. They show us this powerful king as a patron and a protector of Buddhism, who made use of his sovereignty, which extended from the extreme north to the extreme south of India, for the purpose of spreading abroad everywhere the teaching of Buddha, and who, unlike other rulers, in his rock and pillar edicts, did not narrate his own conquests and glorious deeds, but exhorted the people to virtuous conduct, warned them against sin, and preached love and tolerance. These singular edicts of the King Aśoka are themselves precious literary monuments hewn in stone, but they are also of importance for the history of literature on account of their script

<sup>1</sup> See Fleet, JRAS, 1912, 230.

and their language, as well as for evidences of religious history. In the year 178 B.C., 137 years after the coronation of Candragupta, the last scion of the Maurya dynasty was hurled from the throne by a king Puṣyamitra. The mention of this King Puṣyamitra, for instance, in a drama of Kālidāsa, is an important evidence for the determination of the date of several works of Indian literature. The same is true of the Græco-Bactrian King Menander, who reigned about 144 B.C. He appears under the name Milinda in the famous Buddhist book *Milindapañha*.

Next to the Greeks it is the Chinese to whom we are indebted for some of the most important date-determinations of Indian literary history. Since the first century after Christ we hear of Buddhist missionaries who go to China and translate Buddhist works into Chinese, of Indian embassies in China and of Chinese pilgrims, who make pilgrimages to India in order to visit the holy places of Buddhism. Works of Indian literature are translated into Chinese, and the Chinese give us exact dates at which these translations were made. There are especially three Chinese pilgrims Fa-hien, who went to India in the year 399, Hsüan-Tsang, who made great journeys in India from 630 to 645, and I-tsing, who sojourned in India from 671 to 695, whose descriptions of their travels are preserved. These accounts give us many a valuable datum on Indian antiquity and works of literature. The chronological data of the Chinese are, contrary to those of the Indians, wonderfully exact and reliable. It is only too true of the Indians, what the Arabian traveller Albēṛūnī, who in the year 1030 wrote a book on India, which is very important for us, said of them: "Unfortunately the Hindus do not pay much attention to the historical order of things, they are very careless in relating the chronological succession of their kings, and when they are pressed for information and are at a loss, not knowing what to say, they invariably take to romancing."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, one must not believe, as it has so often been asserted, that the historical sense is entirely lacking in the Indians. In India, too, there has been historical writing; and in any case we find in India numerous accurately dated inscriptions, which

<sup>1</sup> See E. C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, English Ed., II, pp. 10 ff.

could hardly be the case if the Indians had had no sense of history at all. It is only true that the Indians, in their writing of history, never knew how to keep fact and fiction strictly apart, that to them the facts themselves were always more important than their chronological order, and that they attached no importance at all, especially in literary matters, to the question of what was earlier or later. Whatever seems good, true and right, to the Indian, that he raises to the greatest possible age; and if he wants to impart a special sanctity to any doctrine, or if he wishes that his work shall be as widespread as possible, and gain respect, then he veils his name in a modest incognito, and mentions some ancient sage as the author of the book. This still happens at the present day, and in past centuries it was no different. It is for this reason that so many quite modern works pass under the time-honoured name of 'Upaniṣads' or 'Purāṇas,' new, sour wine put into old bottles. The intention to deceive, however, is as a rule out of the question in these cases. It is only that extreme indifference reigns with regard to the right of literary ownership and the desire of asserting it. Only in the later centuries does it happen that authors give their own names with full details, together with the names of their parents, grandparents, teachers, patrons, and scanty biographical notes about themselves. The authors of astronomical books generally also give the exact date of the day on which they completed their work. Since the fifth century after Christ, inscriptions too begin to give us information about the dates of many writers. In the deciphering of inscriptions great progress has been made during the last decades. Witness thereof are the *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, and the periodical *Epigraphia Indica*. And it is the inscriptions to which we are not only indebted for the surest dates of Indian literary history, settled up to now, but from which we also hope to get the greater number of solutions of the chronological problems still unsolved at present.

#### THE ART OF WRITING AND THE TRANSMISSION OF INDIAN LITERATURE

The inscriptions are of such great significance for us because they also give us information on the question which is certainly

not unimportant for Indian literary history, namely, the question regarding the age of the art of writing in India. As we shall soon see, the history of Indian literature does not by any means begin with the written literature, and it is not actual writings, but only orally transmitted texts which belong to the oldest periods of Indian literary history. Nevertheless, it is clear that the question as to the time since when literary productions have been written down and thus transmitted, cannot by any means be an indifferent one for the history of the literature. Now the oldest dateable Indian inscriptions which have been found up till now, are the above-mentioned Edicts of King Aśoka of the third century before Christ. However, it would be quite wrong, if one were to form the conclusion—as Max Müller has done—that the use of writing in India does not date back to an earlier age. Palaeographic facts prove undeniably that writing cannot have been a new invention as late as the time of Aśoka, but must already have had a long history behind it. The oldest Indian script, from which the Nāgarī script, the best known in Europe, and all the numerous alphabets used in Indian manuscripts are derived, is called 'Brāhma script,' because it is supposed to have been invented, according to the Indian myth, by the Creator, the god Brahman himself. According to G. Bühler's comprehensive researches,<sup>1</sup> this script goes back to a Semitic origin, namely, to the oldest North Semitic characters, as they are found in Phœnician inscriptions, and on the stone of Mesa about 890 B.C. Probably it was by merchants—perhaps already about 800 B.C.—that writing was introduced into India. For a long time, probably, it must have been used entirely for commercial purposes, records, correspondence, calculations, and so on. When afterwards writing began to be used also for the minutes of embassies, proclamations, records and so on in the Royal Chanceries, the kings must also have employed learned grammarians, Brahmans, who adapted the foreign alphabet more and more to the needs of Indian phonetics, and out of the 22 Semitic characters, elaborated a complete alphabet of 44 letters, as the oldest inscriptions already show it. However, since when writing has also been used in

<sup>1</sup> *Indische Palaeographie* in the 'Grundriss' I, 2, and *On the Origin of the Indian Brāhma Alphabet*, 2nd ed., Strassburg, 1898.

India for the recording of literary productions is a much debated question, which is hard to answer. Certain proofs of the existence of manuscripts, or even only authentic reports on the writing-down of texts do not exist from olden times. In the whole of Vedic literature it has not, up till now, been possible to find any proof of the knowledge of writing. In the Buddhist canon, which was probably completed about 240 B.C., there is no mention of manuscripts, although in it there are numerous proofs of an acquaintance with the art of writing, and its extensive use at that time. Writing is there spoken of as a distinguished branch of learning, it was expressly permitted to the Buddhist nuns to occupy themselves with the art of writing; we hear of monks, who through written praise of religious suicide, cause the death of others; it is said that 'a registered thief' (*i.e.* a thief whose name is written down in the King's palace) may not be admitted into the order as a monk; a game of letters<sup>1</sup> is mentioned; and it is said that parents should have their children instructed in writing and arithmetic. Yet in the sacred books of Buddhism there is not to be found the least indication of the fact that the books themselves were copied or read. This is all the more striking because in the sacred texts of Buddhism we are informed of all possible, even most insignificant, details in the lives of the monks. "From morning till evening we can follow the monks in their daily life, on their wanderings, during their rest, in their solitude, and in their intercourse with other monks or laymen; we know the furniture of the rooms inhabited by them, their utensils, the contents of their store-rooms; but nowhere do we hear that they read or copied their sacred texts, nowhere that such things as writing materials or manuscripts were owned by anybody in the monasteries. The memory of the brethren 'rich in hearing'—what we now call well-read was at that time called rich in hearing—took the place of monastic libraries; and if, in a community, the knowledge of an indispensable text, for instance, the confession formula which had to be recited in the assembly of brethren at every full-moon or new-moon threatened to

<sup>1</sup> This consists of the guessing of letters drawn in the air on on a playmate's back.

disappear, then they followed the instructions prescribed in an old Buddhist rule for the community : From amongst those monks one monk shall without delay be sent off to the neighbouring community. 'To him shall be said : Go brother, and when you have memorized the confession formula, the full one or the abridged one, then return to us.'<sup>1</sup> Wherever the preservation of the teachings of the Master and of the sacred texts is spoken of, there is nowhere a mention of writing and reading, but always only of hearing and memorizing.

From such facts one would conclude that at the time, that is, in the fifth century B.C. the idea of the possibility of writing books had not as yet occurred at all. Such a conclusion, however, would be too hasty, for it is a strange phenomenon that in India, from the oldest times, up till the present day, the spoken word, and not writing, has been the basis of the whole of the literary and scientific activity. Even to-day, when the Indians have known the art of writing since centuries, when there are innumerable manuscripts, and when even a certain sanctity and reverence is accorded to these manuscripts, when the most important texts are accessible also in India in cheap printed editions, even to-day, the whole of the literary and scientific intercourse in India is based upon the spoken word. Not out of manuscripts or books does one learn the texts, but from the mouth of the teacher, to-day as thousands of years ago. The written text can at most be used as an aid to learning, as a support to the memory, but no authority is attributed to it. Authority is possessed only by the spoken word of the teacher. If to-day all the manuscripts and prints were to be lost, that would by no means cause the disappearance of Indian literature from the face of the earth, for a great portion of it could be recalled out of the memory of the scholars and reciters. The works of the poets, too, were in India never intended for readers, but always for hearers. Even modern poets do not desire to be read, but their wish is that their poetry may become 'an adornment for the throats of the experts'.

Therefore, the fact, that in the older literary works there is no mention of manuscripts, is not absolutely a proof of the non-existence of the latter. Perhaps they are not mentioned

<sup>1</sup> H. Oldenberg, *Aus Indien und Iran*. Berlin, 1899, pp. 22. f.

<sup>2</sup> G. Bühler, *Indische Palaeographie* (Grundriss I, 2), pp. 8 f.

only for the reason that the writing and reading of them was of no importance, all teaching and learning being done by word of mouth. Therefore, it is yet possible that already in very ancient times also books were copied and used the same as now, as aids to instruction. That is the opinion of some scholars.' Yet it seems to me worthy of notice that in the later literature—in the later Purāṇas, in Buddhist Mahāyāna texts, and in modern additions to the old epic—the copying of books and the presentation of the same is praised as a religious act, while in the whole of the older literature no trace of it is to be found. It is also significant that the old works on phonetics and grammar, even the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali in the second century B.C., take no notice whatsoever of writing, that they always treat of spoken sounds and never of written characters, and that the whole grammatical terminology always has only the spoken word, and never the written text in view. From all this it is after all probable, that in ancient times there were no written books in India.

For this strange phenomenon, namely that the art of writing had been known for centuries, without having been used for literary purposes, there are several possible reasons. First of all there was probably a want of suitable writing material; but this would have been found, if there had been a strong need of it. Such a need, however, was not only not present, but it was to the interest of the priests, who were the bearers of the oldest literature, that the sacred texts which they taught in their schools, should *not* be committed to writing. By this means they kept a very lucrative monopoly firmly in their hands. He who wished to learn something, had to come to them and reward them richly; and they had it in their power to withhold their texts from those circles whom they wished to exclude from sacred knowledge. How important was the latter to them we are taught by the Brahmanical law-books, which repeatedly emphasize the law

<sup>1</sup> On the age of the art of writing in India, cf. also Barth, RHR 41, 1900, 184 ff. = Oeuvres II, 317 ff. The arguments brought forward by Śhyamaji Krishnavarmā, OC VI, Leyden 1888, pp. 905 ff. for the knowledge and use of writing, even at the Vedic period, are well worthy of notice.

that the members of the lowest castes (the Sūdras and the Cāṇḍālas) may not learn the sacred texts; for impure as a corpse, as a burial place, is the Śūdra, therefore, the Veda may not be recited in his vicinity. In the old law-book of Gautama<sup>1</sup> it is said: "If a Sūdra hears the Veda, his ears shall be stopped with molten tin or lac, if he repeats the sacred texts, his tongue shall be cut out, if he stores them in his memory his body shall be struck in two." Then how could they have written down their texts and thus exposed themselves to the danger that they might be read by the unauthorized? Moreover, the transmission of the texts through the mouth of the teacher was an old-established method for their preservation,—why should they replace it by writing, this new-fashioned invention? And the chief reason<sup>2</sup> for the fact that writing was for so long not used for literary purposes, is probably to be found in the fact that the Indians only became acquainted with the art of writing at a period when they had already since a long time possessed a rich literature that was only orally transmitted.

Certain it is, that the whole of the most ancient literature of the Indians, Brahmanical as well as Buddhist, arose without the art of writing, and continued to be transmitted without it for centuries.<sup>3</sup> Whoever wished to become acquainted with a text had to go to a teacher in order to hear it from him. Therefore, we repeatedly read in the older literature, that a warrior or a Brahman, who wished to acquire a certain knowledge, travels to a famous teacher, and undertakes unspeakable troubles and sacrifices in order to participate in the teaching, which cannot be attained in any other manner. Therefore, to a teacher, as the bearer and preserver of the sacred knowledge, the highest veneration is due, according to ancient Indian law;—as the spiritual father he is venerated, now as an equal, now as a superior, of the physical father, he is looked upon as an image of the god Brahman, and to him who serves the teacher faithfully and humbly, Brahman's heaven is assured. Therefore, also the

<sup>1</sup> XII, 4-6.

<sup>2</sup> Compare especially T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, London, 1903, pp. 172 f.

<sup>3</sup> I-tsing (*Monks. Takakusu*, pp. 182 f.) mentions that in his time (7th century A.D.) the Vedas were still only handed down orally.



introduction of the pupil to the teacher who is to teach him the sacred texts is one of the most sacred ceremonies from which no Hindu could withdraw himself without risking to lose his caste. A book existed only when and only so long as there were teachers and pupils, who taught and learned it. What we call various branches of literature, different theological and philosophical systems, different editions or recensions of a work, were in ancient India in reality different schools, in which certain texts continued to be taught, heard and learned from generation to generation. Only if we keep this in view can we understand the whole development of the oldest Indian literature.

It also must be considered, that the method of handing-down was quite different in the case of the religious texts from that of the secular. The religious texts were held sacred, and accuracy in learning was in their case a strict requirement of religion. Word for word, with careful avoidance of every error in pronunciation, in accent, in the manner of recitation, the pupil had to repeat them after the teacher and impress them on his memory. There can be no doubt that this kind of oral transmission gives a greater guarantee for the preservation of the original text than the copying and re-copying of manuscripts. Indeed, we have—as we shall see later—direct proofs that, for example, the songs of the *Rgveda*, as we read them to-day in our printed editions, have remained almost unaltered, word for word, syllable for syllable, accent for accent, since the fifth century B.C. It was otherwise, no doubt, with secular works, especially with the epic poems. There the texts were certainly exposed to numerous disfigurements, there every teacher, every reciter, considered himself entitled to alter and to improve, to omit and to add, *ad libitum*—and criticism here faces a difficult, often impossible, task when it desires to restore such texts to their oldest and most original form. Nevertheless, oral transmission, where it is still possible to resort to it—and this is so in the case of the oldest Veda text with the help of the old phonetic manuals of instruction (*Prātisākhya*s) and in other cases often with the help of commentaries—is the most valuable aid to the reconstruction of our texts. For the manuscripts, from which we obtain most of our texts, reach but seldom to a great age. The oldest writing-

materials on which the Indians wrote are palm leaves and strips of birch bark; and it is significant of the conservative mind of the Indians that even to-day, in spite of their acquaintance with the much more convenient paper, and in spite of the general use of print, manuscripts are still written on palm leaves. Both materials are very fragile, and in the Indian climate quickly perishable. Thus it happens that the vast majority of manuscripts which we possess, and from which practically all our text editions are made, only date from the last few centuries. Manuscripts from the fourteenth century already are amongst the greatest rarities. Only a few manuscripts found in India proper date back to the eleventh and twelfth century.<sup>1</sup> However, the oldest Indian manuscripts were found in Nepal, Japan and Eastern Turkestan. The manuscripts found in Nepal date back as far as the seventh century, and in Japan manuscripts on palm leaves have been discovered which date from the first half of the sixth century. Since the year 1889 there have been finds of manuscripts in Kashgar and its environs which take us back to the fifth century, and M. A. Stein, in the year 1900, dug up out of the sand in the desert of Taklamakān near Khotan, five hundred small tablets of wood covered with writing, which reach back to the fourth century and are perhaps older still. Also by means of the Prussian Turfan Expedition and the more recent discoveries of M. A. Stein, fragments of manuscripts from the earliest centuries after Christ have been brought to light.\*

Wood as a writing material is already mentioned in the Buddhist writings, and the use of it must be very old. The use of palm leaves also can be traced back to the first century after Christ. Rarely in India were cotton stuff, leather, metal and stones used as writing materials. The Buddhists mention here and there the writing, not only of documents, but also of verses and maxims, on gold plates. A gold plate with a ~~votive~~ inscription has also been preserved to us. Records and even

<sup>1</sup> Kielhorn discovered the oldest manuscripts of Western India, of the 11th century. (Report on the Search for Sanskrit MSS. in the Bombay Presidency during the year 1890-91, Bombay, 1892.)

\* See Lüders, *Ueber die literarischen Funde von Ostturkestan*, SBA. 1914, pp. 90 ff.

Small manuscripts, on silver plates, have often been found in India. Very frequently, however, copper plates were used for the writing of documents, especially deeds of gift, and such have been preserved in great numbers. The Chinese pilgrim Hsüan-Tsang reports that the King Kaṇiṣka had the sacred writings of the Buddhists engraved on copper tablets. Whether this is based on truth, we do not know, but it certainly is credible, for even literary works also have been found on copper tablets. It would hardly be credible that in India literary works were also hewn into stone, if, a few years ago, inscriptions on stone slabs had not been found in Ajmere, which contained entire dramatic writings, albeit, dramas of a king and his court poet.

The great majority, however, of the Indian manuscripts on which our texts rest, are written on paper. But paper was first introduced into India only by the Mohammedans, and the oldest paper manuscript is supposed to have been written in the year 1223-24 after Christ.

In spite of the above-mentioned predilection of the Indians for oral teaching and learning, already many centuries ago they began to collect manuscripts, and to preserve them in libraries. Such libraries—'treasure-houses of the Goddess of Speech' (*sarasvatībhaṇḍāgāra*) as the Indians call them—existed and even now exist in numbers in monasteries and temples, in the palaces of princes, and even in the private houses of the wealthy. It is reported of the poet Bāṇa (about 620 after Christ) that he kept his own reader, so he must have possessed a considerable private library. In the eleventh century King Bhoja of Dhār had a famous library. In the course of centuries these libraries became exceedingly well stocked. Thus Bühler found in two Jain libraries in Khambay over 30,000 manuscripts, and in the Palace library of Tanjore in Southern India over 12,000 manuscripts. The systematic investigation of these Indian libraries, and the thorough search for manuscripts extending over the whole of India, began in the year 1861, when Colebrooke and other

Englishmen had, already before that, brought fairly large collections of manuscripts to Europe. However, in the year 1868 Whitley Stokes, well-known as a Celtic scholar and at that time Secretary of the Indian Council at Simla, started a complete

cataloguing of all Sanskrit manuscripts, and since then the Indian Government has for years, in the Indian annual budget granted a large sum (24,000 Rupees) for the purpose of the 'Search of Sanskrit manuscripts'. Thus it is through the munificence of the Anglo-Indian Government and through the untiring industry of English, German and Indian scholars, that we now possess, to a considerable degree, a survey of the whole, enormous mass of Indian literature, so far as it is accessible in manuscripts.

### INDIAN LANGUAGES IN THEIR RELATION TO LITERATURE<sup>1</sup>

The whole of this vast literature which has thus been handed down to us, is for the most part composed in Sanskrit. Yet the terms 'Indian literature' and 'Sanskrit literature' are by no means identical. The history of Indian literature in the most comprehensive sense of the word, is the history of a literature which not only stretches across great periods of time and an enormous area, but is also one which is composed in many languages. Those languages of India which belong to the Indo-European family of languages, have passed through three great phases of development, partly consecutive in time, but partly also parallel.

These are :—

- I. Ancient Indian,
- II. The Middle Indian languages and dialects,
- III. The Modern Indian languages and dialects.

#### I. *Ancient Indian*

The language of the oldest Indian literary monuments, of the songs, prayers and magic formulas of the Vedas, is sometimes called 'Ancient Indian' in the narrower sense, sometimes also 'Vedic' (inappropriately also 'Vedic Sanskrit'). 'Ancient High Indian' is perhaps the best name for this language, which, while based on a spoken dialect, is yet no longer an actual popular

<sup>1</sup> See R. G. Bhandarkar, *JERAS* 16, 245 ff.; 17, 1 ff., and G. Grierson, *ESOS* I, 2, 1920, pp. 51 ff.

<sup>2</sup> It is called thus by Max Müller, *Buddhist India*, p. 125.

language, but a literary language transmitted in the circle of priestly singers from generation to generation, and intentionally preserved in its archaic form. The dialect on which the Ancient High Indian is based, the dialect as it was spoken by the Aryan immigrants in the North-West of India, was closely related to the Ancient Persian and Avestic, and not very far removed from the primitive Indo-Iranian language.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the difference between the language of the Vedas and this primitive Indo-Iranian language seems to be less, perhaps, than that between the Indian languages Sanskrit and Pāli. The Vedic language hardly differs at all from Sanskrit in its phonetics, but only through a much greater antiquity, and especially through a greater wealth of grammatical forms. Thus, for instance, Ancient High Indian has a subjunctive which is missing in Sanskrit; it has a dozen different infinitive-endings, of which but one single one remains in Sanskrit. The aorists, very largely represented in the Vedic language, disappear in the Sanskrit more and more. Also the case and personal endings are still much more perfect in the oldest language than in the later Sanskrit.

A later phase of Ancient High Indian appears already in the hymns of the tenth book of the *Rgveda* and in some parts of the *Atharvaveda* and the collections of the *Yajurveda*. On the other hand, the language of the Vedic prose writings, of the Brāhmaṇas, Aranyakas and Upaniṣads, has preserved only a few relics of Ancient High Indian, on the whole the language of these works is already what is called 'Sanskrit,' while the language of the Sūtras belonging to the Vedāṅgas only in quite exceptional cases shows Vedic forms, but is essentially pure Sanskrit. Only the numerous Mantras, taken from the ancient Vedic hymns, i.e., verses, prayers, spells, and magic formulas, which we find quoted in the Vedic prose writings and the Sūtras, belong, as regards their language, to Ancient High Indian.

The Sanskrit of this most ancient prose-literature—of the Brāhmaṇas, Aranyakas, Upaniṣads and of the Sūtras—differs little from the Sanskrit which is taught in the celebrated grammar

<sup>1</sup> This is the common original language to be inferred from a comparison of the language of the Veda with the Old Persian of the cuneiform inscriptions and the language of the Avesta.

of Pāṇini (probably about fifth century B.C.). The best designation is perhaps 'Ancient Sanskrit'. It is the language which was spoken in Pāṇini's time, and probably earlier too, by the educated, principally by the priests and scholars. It is the Sanskrit of which Patañjali, a grammarian of the second century B.C., still says that in order to learn it correctly one must hear it from the 'Sīṣṭas,' that is, from the learned Brahmans who were well versed in literature. But that the sphere of people speaking Sanskrit extended much further—to all 'educated people'—we learn from the same Patañjali, who tells us an anecdote, in which a grammarian converses in Sanskrit with a charioteer and the two have a discussion on etymologies. When in Indian dramas, the languages are so distributed that the king, the Brahmans, and nobles speak Sanskrit, while the women and all the common people use the vulgar tongues, only with the noteworthy exception that a few educated women (nuns and courtesans) occasionally speak Sanskrit, whereas uneducated Brahmans are introduced speaking popular dialects,<sup>1</sup> then most probably the use of the languages in real life is reflected therein—and not only of the period after Christ, when these dramas were composed, but also of much earlier centuries. Sanskrit was certainly not a popular language, but the language spoken in wide circles of educated people, and understood in still wider circles. For, as in the drama dialogues occur between Sanskrit-speaking and Prākṛit-speaking persons, so too in real life Sanskrit must have been understood by those who did not speak it themselves.<sup>1</sup> Also the bards, who recited the popular epics in the

<sup>1</sup> The linguistic conditions of ancient India, of which the dramas give us such a good idea, have altered very little up to the present day. It still happens that in a rich house with a large staff of servants who come from different districts, a dozen different languages and dialects are spoken and generally understood. G. A. Grierson describes a case known to himself, where in one house in Bengal, no less than thirteen languages and dialects are spoken. The master of the house speaks to Europeans in the refined Bengali language, while in ordinary life he uses the Bengali of everyday intercourse, which differs widely from the literary language. His wife comes from a place at a distance of one hundred miles, and speaks the peculiar women's dialect of that district. His secondary wife, whose ordinary colloquial language is the Urdu of Lucknow, lapses into a jargon when she is angry. The manager of his business speaks Dhākī, while among the servants some speak Uriyā, others Bhojpūrī, Awadhī, Maithilī, Ahīrī, and Chaugaiyā. They all understand each other perfectly, although each one speaks his own dialect. It very rarely happens that one of them uses the dialect of the person whom he is addressing. (*Ind. Ant.*, 30, 1901, p. 556.)

palaces of kings and in the houses of the rich and nobles, must have been understood. The language of the epics is likewise Sanskrit. We call it 'Epic Sanskrit,' and it differs but little from the 'Classical Sanskrit,' partly in that it has preserved some archaisms, but more in that it keeps less strictly to the rules of grammar and approaches more nearly to the language of the people, so that one may call it a more popular form of Sanskrit. But there would never have been popular epics written in Sanskrit,<sup>1</sup> if Sanskrit had not once been a language that was widely understood—similarly as to-day in Germany Modern High German is universally understood, although it differs essentially from all spoken dialects.

That Sanskrit is a 'high language' or 'class language' or 'literary language'—whatever we may call it in contrast to the actual language of the people—the Indians themselves express through the name 'Sanskrit'. For Sanskrit—Saṃskṛta, as much as 'made ready, ordered, prepared, perfect, pure, sacred'—signifies the noble or sacred language, in contradistinction to 'Prākṛit'—prākṛta, as much as 'original, natural, ordinary, common'—which signifies the 'common language of the people'.

Yet Sanskrit should never be spoken of as a 'dead' language, rather as a 'fettered' language, inasmuch as its natural development was checked, in that, through the rules of the grammarians, it was arrested at a certain stage. For through the Grammar of Pāṇini, in about the fifth century B.C., a fixed standard was created, which remained a criterion for the Sanskrit language for all future times. What we call 'Classical Sanskrit' means Pāṇini's Sanskrit, that is, the Sanskrit which according to the rules of Pāṇini's Grammar, is alone correct.<sup>2</sup> In the 'fetters' of this Grammar, however, the language still continued to live. The great mass of poetic and scientific literature, throughout a thousand years, was produced in this language, the 'Classical Sanskrit'. Moreover, Sanskrit

<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that the popular epics were originally composed in dialect and were later translated into Sanskrit. This supposition, however, lacks all evidence from facts, as H. Jacobi (ZDMG., 48, 407 ff.) has shown.

<sup>2</sup> Only this literary language as determined by the Indian grammarians is called Sanskrit by the Indians. If, as it is often done, people speak of 'Vedic Sanskrit' the term 'Sanskrit' is extended to Ancient Indian.

is not a 'dead' language even to-day. There are still at the present day a number of Sanskrit periodicals in India, and topics of the day are discussed in Sanskrit pamphlets. Also the *Mahābhārata* is still to-day read aloud publicly, which presupposes at least a partial understanding. I have myself observed with pleasure and surprise, that scenes from such ornate Sanskrit dramas as *Mudrārāksasa* and *Uttararāmacarita*, performed on a primitive stage at Santiniketan, were understood and greatly appreciated by a large audience of students, both men and women. To this very day poetry is still composed and works are still written in Sanskrit, and it is the language in which Indian scholars even now converse upon scientific questions. Sanskrit at the least plays the same part in India still as Latin in the Middle Ages in Europe, or as Hebrew with the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There are epigraphical grounds for assuming that Sanskrit is a modification of a Northern Indian dialect, which was developed by schools of grammar, and which in historical times spread slowly throughout India among the educated classes; see Bühler, *Ep. Ind.*, I, p. 5. Sanskrit is called a sacred language (brāhmī vāc) in the *Mahābhārata*, I. 78, 18, and it probably always was the language of a certain class of society. Cf. Windisch, *Ueber den sprachlichen Charakter des Pali* (OC., XIV, Paris, 1906), pp. 14 ff.; Thomas, *JRAS.*, 1904, 747 f.; W. Petersen, *JAOS.*, 32, 1912, 414 ff.; T. Michelson, *JAOS.*, 33, 1913, 145 ff. About the wide use of Sanskrit in the India of to-day Paul Deussen (*Erinnerungen an Indien*, Kiel, 1904, pp. 2 f.) says: "Not only the professional scholars, as especially the native Sanskrit Professors of the Indian Universities, speak Sanskrit with great elegance, not only their hearers are able to handle it as well as our students of classical philology can handle Latin, but the numerous private scholars, saints, ascetics, and even wider circles can speak and write Sanskrit with facility: I have repeatedly conversed in it for hours with the Maharaja of Benares: manufacturers, industrials, merchants, partly speak it or understand what is spoken: in every little village my first enquiry was for one who speaks Sanskrit, whereupon immediately one or another came forward, who usually became my guide, indeed often my friend." When he gave lectures in English, he was often invited to repeat in Sanskrit what he had said. "After this had been done, a discussion followed in which some spoke English, others Sanskrit, yet others Hindi, which, therefore, was also understood, to a certain extent, because pure Hindi differs from Sanskrit in little more than by the loss of inflectional endings. Hence every Hindu understands as much of Sanskrit as an Italian of Latin, especially as, in the real Hindustan, the script has remained the same: and a smattering of Sanskrit can be traced down to the circles of servants and the lower classes, wherefore a letter to Benares with only a Sanskrit address will without difficulty reach its destination, through every postal messenger." As to Sanskrit as a living language, see also S. Krishnavarma in OC. V, Berlin, 1891, II b, p. 293; R. G. Bhandarkar, *JBRAS.*, 16, 1896, 268 ff., 297 ff.; Windisch, OC. XIV, Paris, 1897, I, 267, 269; Hertel, *Tantrikhyika*, Transl. I, pp. 8 ff., and *HOS.*, Vol. XII, pp. 80 ff.



Summing up, I would, therefore, divide Ancient Indian in its relation to literature as follows :—

1. Ancient High Indian :

(a) Language of the oldest hymns and mantras, especially of those of the *Rgveda*.

(b) Language of the later hymns and mantras, especially those of the other Vedas, besides of the mantras occurring only in the Brāhmaṇas and Sūtras.

2. Sanskrit :

(a) Ancient Sanskrit, the language of the Vedic prose works (with the exception of the Mantras) and of Pāṇini.

(b) Epic Sanskrit, the language of the popular epics.

(c) Classical Sanskrit, the language of the Classical Sanskrit literature after Pāṇini.

## II. *The Middle Indian Languages and Dialects*

Simultaneously and parallel with the development of Sanskrit proceeded the more natural further development of the popular dialects spoken by the Aryan Indians. The languages and dialects which we distinguish as ' Middle Indian ' are not indeed derived directly from the Sanskrit, but rather from the Indo-Aryan popular languages which underlie the Ancient High Indian and the Sanskrit, or are related to the two latter. Considering the size of India, it is not to be wondered at that, with the gradual spreading of the Aryan immigrants from the West to the East and the South, a large number of varying dialects were formed. Of the diversity of these dialects we get an idea from the oldest Indian inscriptions, which are all written in Middle Indian and *not* in Sanskrit. Quite a number of such popular languages, moreover, have been raised to the rank of literary languages. Only these shall be briefly enumerated here :

1. The most important of the Middle Indian literary languages is *Pāli*, the ecclesiastical language of the Buddhists of Ceylon, Burma and Siam, the language in which the oldest preserved collection of sacred writings of Buddhism is written. The Buddhists themselves tell us that Buddha did not, like the Brahmins, preach in the learned Sanskrit, but talked to the

people in the language of the people. As Buddha first preached in the land of Magadha (Southern Bihar), and there displayed his best activity, therefore, the Buddhists tell us that Pāli is the same as Māgadhi, the language of the province of Magadha. However, that cannot be right, as the dialect of Magadha which is otherwise known to us does not agree with Pāli. It is, however, probable that Pāli is a mixed language the foundation of which was Māgadhi.<sup>1</sup> The word Pāli really signifies 'row', then 'order, regulation, rule', hence also 'sacred text' and finally the language of the sacred texts, in contradistinction to the Ancient Sinhalese, the language in which the commentaries to these texts were composed.

2. Besides the Pāli literature there exists also a Buddhist Sanskrit literature. Now in these Buddhist works there is frequently only the prose in Sanskrit, while the interspersed metrical pieces, the so-called 'Gāthās' (*i.e.*, 'songs' or 'verses') are composed in a Middle Indian dialect, which has, therefore, been called 'Gāthā dialect'. But this term is not quite appropriate, as the same dialect is found also in prose portions, and even whole prose works are written in it. It is an old Indian dialect, which through the insertion of Sanskrit terminations and other Sanskritisms in a rather crude manner, tries to approach the Sanskrit, wherefore Senart suggested for it the designation 'mixed Sanskrit'.<sup>2</sup>

3. Like the Buddhists, the Jainas too did not use Sanskrit for their sacred writings, but Middle Indian dialects, indeed two different Prākritis:<sup>3</sup>

(a) The Jaina Prākrit (also called Ardhamāgadhi or Ārṣa), the language of the older works of the Jaina Canon.

<sup>1</sup> This is the view of E. Windisch, *Ueber den sprachlichen Charakter des Pali* (OC., XIV., Paris, 1906) and of G. A. Grierson, *Bhandarkar Com.*, Vol., 117 ff. The latter agrees with Sten Konow (ZDMG., 64, 1910, 114 ff.), that Pāli is similar to Paśāñī-Prākri. The latter was probably the local dialect of Eastern Gāndhāra and the district of Taxila, a famous seat of learning at the time of Buddha.

<sup>2</sup> See S. Lefmann, ZDMG, 212 ff.; and E. Senart, *Ind. Ant.*, 21, 1892, 243 ff. Haraprasād Sāstrī (*Ind. Hist. Qu.*, I, 1925, pp. 204 f.) thinks that it is not a sanskritised vernacular but 'the spoken language of N. India'.

<sup>3</sup> The Hindus do not designate popular languages generally by the term 'Prākrit' but only those popular languages which are used in literature. For the whole of this

(b) *The Jaina-Māhārāṣṭrī, the language in which the commentaries to the Jaina Canon and the non-religious poetical works of the Jainas are written.*<sup>1</sup> This dialect is closely related to that Prākṛit, which has been used most frequently as a literary language for secular writing, namely—

4. The Māhārāṣṭrī, the language of Mahārāṣṭra, the land of the Marathas. This is universally considered the best Prākṛit, and when the Indians speak simply of Prākṛit then they mean Māhārāṣṭrī. It was used principally for lyric poetry, especially also for the lyric parts in the dramas. However, there are also epic poems in Māhārāṣṭrī. Other important Prākṛit dialects which are used in the drama are :

5. The Śaurasenī, which in the prose of the dramas is chiefly spoken by high-born women. Its foundation is the dialect of Sūrasena, the capital of which is Mathurā.

6. Persons of the lower classes speak Māgadhī in the dramas, the dialect of Magadha, and

7. Paisācī is spoken in the drama by the members of the lowest grades of society. The word probably originally designated the dialect of a branch of the Piśācas, although the Indians declared it to be the language of the demons called Piśācas. A famous book of narrative literature, Guṇāḍhya's *Bṛhatkathā* was also composed in this Paisācī dialect.

8. Lastly, the Apabhraṃśa which is used in popular poetry, in Jaina romances and occasionally in the drama, stands midway between the Prākṛit and the modern Indian vernaculars : for 'Apabhraṃśa' is a general term for literary idioms which, though based on the Prākṛit, are more closely adapted to certain popular dialects.<sup>2</sup>

chapter see R. Pischel, *Grammatik der Prākṛit-Sprachen* (in *Grundriss I*, 8 Einleitung) and H. Jacobi in *A Bay A XXIX*, 4, 1918, pp. 81 \*ff.

<sup>1</sup> See H. Jacobi, *Ueber das Prākṛit in der Erzählungs-Litteratur der Jainas*, in *RSO*, II, 1909, pp. 281 ff.

<sup>2</sup> On the Apabhraṃśas see H. Jacobi in *A Bay A, XXIX*, 4, 1918, pp. 53 \*ff.; *XXXI*, 2, 1921, pp. xviii ff., 1 ff. and in *Festschrift für Wackernagel*, pp. 124 ff. Jacobi is of opinion, that the Apabhraṃśa was first used by the poets of the Abhīras and Gurjaras.

### III. *The Modern Indian Languages and Dialects*<sup>1</sup>

By about the year 1000 A.D. the modern Indo-Aryan vernaculars had developed out of the Middle Indian dialects, and from the 12th century onwards these languages can show literatures of their own, which are partly independent and partly dependent on the Sanskrit literature. The most important of these vernaculars is Hindī, the language of the ancient Madhyadeśa or midland, *i.e.*, of the greater portion of the Gangetic Doāb, and of the adjacent plain to the Himalaya in the North, to the valley of the Nerbuddā in the South, beyond Delhi in the West and nearly as far as Cawnpore in the East. Of the numerous Hindī dialects, Kanaujī and Bundelī, and especially Braj Bhākhā (the language of the district of Mathurā), have produced literature worthy of the name. Hindōstānī or Urdu, a dialect with a strong admixture of Perso-Arabic elements,<sup>2</sup> is a form of the Hindī language. It originated in the twelfth century in the neighbourhood of Delhi, then the centre of the Mohammedan rule, in the camps (*urdu*) of the soldiers, hence also called 'Urdu,' *i.e.*, 'camp language'. In the 16th century it also began to produce literature. Nowadays it is the *lingua franca* of the whole of Northern India. High Hindī is a return to the vernacular of the Upper Doāb, which is not as yet influenced by Persian. The following languages, belonging to the adjacent regions, are closely related to the language of the midland: Pānjābī in the North-West, Rājasthānī and Gujarātī in the West, Eastern Pahārī or Naipālī (the language of Nepal), Central Pahārī and Western Pahārī in the East. Rājasthānī and Gujarātī are closely related. Mārwarī, a dialect of Rājasthānī, can scarcely be distinguished from Gujarātī. Eastern Hindī, the language in which Tulsī Dās wrote, is more closely related to the 'Outer' languages. Among the latter are: Lahndā (the language of Western Panjāb) and Sindhī in the North-West, Marāthī in the South, Bihārī, Oriyā, Bengālī and Assamese in the East. Maithilī is a dialect of Bihārī. Since the beginning of

<sup>1</sup> I follow the excellent survey of the Indo-Aryan Vernaculars given by Sir George Grierson in *FSOS* I, 1, 1918, pp. 47 ff. Compare also E. J. Rapson, *Cambridge History*, I, 37 ff.

<sup>2</sup> It is also written in Persian-Arabic characters.

*the 19th century literary Bengālī has diverged considerably from the vernacular by reason of the absorption of so many Sanskrit words. The High Hindī of Benares shows a similar tendency. Nowadays, however, good authors, both in Bengālī and in Hindī, are aiming at keeping their language free from borrowed Sanskrit words.*

The 'Dardic' or modern Pisāca languages, among which Kāśmīrī (the language of Kashmir) possesses a considerable literature, form a separate group.

Finally, Singhalese, the language of Ceylon, is an Indo-Germanic dialect descended from the Middle Indian. Through the introduction of Buddhism and the Buddhistic literature into Ceylon, an early literary activity began here, which was at first limited to the elucidation of the religious texts. In the later centuries we find, in addition, a secular literature influenced by Sanskrit poetry.<sup>1</sup>

All the Indian languages mentioned up to now belong to the Indo-Germanic group of languages. Besides these, there are in India a number of non-Indo-Germanic languages, namely, the Munda languages (scattered dialects in the Mahadeo Hills of the Central Provinces, in the Santāl Parganās and Chotā Nāgpur), the Tibeto-Burmese languages (on the northern and north-eastern borders of India proper) and, above all, the Dravidian languages of Southern India. The latter must at one time have been common in the North as well,<sup>2</sup> for the Indo-Aryan languages show strong Dravidian influence.<sup>3</sup> The most important Dravidian languages are Malayalam (on the coast of Malabar), Kanarese, Telugu and Tamiḷ. Although these languages are not Indo-Germanic, numerous Sanskritisms have penetrated into them; moreover, the not unimportant literature of these languages is greatly dependent on the Sanskrit literature.

In this book we shall have to limit ourselves mainly to the Sanskrit, Pāli and Prākṛit literature. At most it will only be possible to touch on modern Indian literature in an Appendix.

<sup>1</sup> See Wilhelm Geiger, *Literatur und Sprache der Singhalesen*, in 'Grundriss' I, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Sporadic Dravidian dialects are found also in the Ganges valley and even in Baluchistan (Brahūī).

<sup>3</sup> See Grierson, BSOS., I, 8, 1920, pp. 71 f.

## SECTION 1

### THE VEDA OR THE VEDIC LITERATURE

#### WHAT IS THE VEDA ?

As the oldest Indian, and, at the same time, the oldest Indo-European literary monument, a prominent place in the history of world literature is due to the Veda. This is the case too when we remember that throughout at least 3,000 years millions of Hindus have looked on the word of the Veda as the word of God, and that the Veda has given them their standard of thought and feeling. As the Veda, because of its antiquity, stands at the head of Indian literature, no one who has not gained an insight into the Vedic literature can understand the spiritual life and the culture of the Indians. Also Buddhism, whose birth-place is India, will remain for ever incomprehensible to him who does not know the Veda. For the teaching of Buddha is in the same relation to the Veda, as the New Testament is to the Old Testament. No one can understand the new belief without having become acquainted with the old one taught by the Veda.

What, then, is the Veda?

The word 'Veda' means 'knowledge', then 'the knowledge *par excellence*', i.e., 'the sacred, the religious knowledge'. It does not mean *one* single literary work, as for instance, the word 'Koran', nor a complete collection of a certain number of books, compiled at some particular time, as the word 'Bible' (the 'book *par excellence*'), or as the word 'Tipiṭaka,' the 'Bible' of the Buddhists, but a whole great literature, which arose in the course of many centuries, and through centuries has been handed down from generation to generation by verbal transmission, till finally it was declared by a younger generation—but even then at some prehistoric period—to be 'sacred knowledge', 'divine revelation', as much on account of its great age, as on account of its contents. It is here not a matter of a 'Canon'.

which might have been fixed at some council; the belief in the 'sacredness' of this literature arose, as it were, spontaneously, and was seldom seriously disputed.

However, what is now called 'Veda' or 'Vedic literature' consists of three different classes of literary works; and to each of these three classes belongs a greater or a smaller number of separate works, of which some have been preserved, but also many lost.

I. *Samhitās*, i.e., 'Collections', namely, collections of hymns, prayers, incantations, benedictions, sacrificial formulas and litanies.

II. *Brāhmaṇas*, voluminous prose texts, which contain theological matter, especially observations on sacrifice and the practical or mystical significance of the separate sacrificial rites and ceremonies.

III. *Āraṇyakas* ('forest texts') and *Upaniṣads* (secret doctrines') which are partly included in the *Brāhmaṇas* themselves, or attached to them, but partly are also reckoned as independent works. They contain the meditations of forest-hermits and ascetics on God, the world, and mankind, and there is contained in them a good deal of the oldest Indian philosophy.

There must once have existed a fairly large number of *Samhitās*, which originated in different schools of priests and singers, and which continued to be handed down in the same. However, many of these 'collections' were nothing but slightly diverging recensions--*Śākhās*, 'branches', as the Indians say--of one and the same *Samhitā*. Four *Samhitās*, however, are in existence, which differ clearly from each other, and which have been preserved in one or more recensions. These are :—

1. The *R̥gveda-Samhitā*, the collection of the *R̥gveda*. 'R̥gveda' is 'the Veda or the knowledge of the songs of praise' (*ṛc*, plur. *ṛcas*).

2. The *Atharvaveda-Samhitā*, the collection of the *Atharvaveda*, i.e., 'of the knowledge of the magic formulas' (atharvan).

3. The *Sāmaveda-Samhitā*, the collection of the *Sāmaveda*, i.e., 'of the knowledge of the melodies' (*sāman*).

• 4. The *Yajurveda-Saṃhitā*, the collection of the *Yajurveda*, i.e., 'of the knowledge of the sacrificial formulas' (*yajus*, plur. *yajūṃṣi*) of which there are two rather strongly diverging texts, namely :—

(a) The *Saṃhitā* of the *Black Yajurveda*, which has been preserved in several recensions, of which the most important are the *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā* and the *Maitrāyaṇī-Saṃhitā*; and

(b) the *Saṃhitā* of the *White Yajurveda*, which has been preserved in the *Vājasaneyī-Saṃhitā*.

On account of these four different *Saṃhitās* the Indians distinguish between four different Vedas—and, therefore, one often speaks of the 'Vedas' in the plural—namely, *R̥gveda*, *Atharvaveda*, *Sāmaveda*, and (*Black* and *White*) *Yajurveda*. Every work that belongs to the class of the *Brāhmaṇas*, of the *Āraṇyakas*, or of the *Upaniṣads*, is joined to one of the enumerated *Saṃhitās*, and 'belongs,' as we say, to one of the four Vedas. There are, therefore, not only *Saṃhitās*, but also *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣads* of the *R̥gveda*, as well as of the *Atharvaveda*, of the *Sāmaveda*, and of the *Yajurveda*. Thus, for example, the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* belongs to the *R̥gveda*, the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa* to the *White Yajurveda*, and the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* to the *Sāmaveda*, and so on.

Every work which belongs to one of the three above-mentioned classes, and to one of the four Vedas, must be designated as 'Vedic,' and the whole Vedic literature is thus presented to us as a long succession of works of religious content—collections of songs, prayer-books, theological and theosophical treatises—which belong to different successive periods of time, but which represent a unity, in so far as they all together form the foundation for the Brahmanical religious system, and have the same significance for Brahmanism as the *Old Testament* has for Judaism or the *New Testament* for Christianity. As Jews and Christians look on their 'Holy Scripture,' so the Brahmanic Indians look on their Veda, in its whole extent, as divine revelation. But it is significant that to the expression 'Holy Scripture' there corresponds in the case of the Indians the expression 'Sruti', 'hearing', because the revealed texts were not written and read, but only spoken and



heard. The whole history of Indian philosophy bears witness that not only the ancient hymns of the *R̥gveda* were looked upon as 'breathed out' by the God Brahman, and only 'visioned' by the ancient seers, but that also every word in the *Upaniṣads*, the latest productions of the Vedic literature, was looked upon as indisputable wisdom emanating from the God Brahman himself. However much the different systems of Indian philosophy may vary, they are nearly all agreed in considering the Veda as revealed, and in appealing to the Veda, especially the *Upaniṣads*—although great freedom and arbitrariness prevail in regard to the explanation of these texts, and every philosopher gleans from them just what he wishes to. Most significant it is, that even the Buddhists, who deny the authority of the Veda, yet concede that it was originally given or 'created' by God Brahman: only, they add, it has been falsified by the Brahmans, and, therefore, contains so many errors.

The expression 'Veda' is justified only for this literature which is regarded as revealed. However, there is another class of works, which has the closest connection with the Vedic literature, but yet cannot be said to belong to the Veda. These are the so-called *Kalpasūtras* (sometimes also called briefly 'Sūtras') or manuals on ritual, which are composed in a peculiar, aphoristic prose style. These include:

1. The *Śrautasūtras*, which contain the rules for the performance of the great sacrifices, which often lasted many days, at which many sacred fires had to burn and a great number of priests had to be employed.

2. The *Gr̥hyasūtras*, which contain directions for the simple ceremonies and sacrificial acts of daily life (at birth, marriage, death, and so on).

3. The *Dharmasūtras*, books of instruction on spiritual and secular law—the oldest law-books of the Indians.

Like *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣads*, these works, too, are connected with one of the four Vedas; and there are *Śrauta*, *Gr̥hya*, and *Dharmasūtras* which belong to the *R̥gveda*, others which belong to the *Sāmaveda*, to the *Yajurveda*, or the *Atharvaveda*. As a matter of fact, they originated in certain Vedic schools which set themselves the task of the study of a

certain Veda. . Yet all these books of instruction are regarded as human work, and no longer as divine revelation; they do not belong to the Veda, but to the 'Vedāṅgas,' the 'limbs,' i.e., 'the auxiliary sciences of the Veda'.

These Vedāṅgas include, besides the works on ritual, also a number of works on phonetics, grammar, etymology, metrics and astronomy. We shall have to speak of these too at the end of the section.

After this general survey of the Vedic literature and the literature connected with it, we turn to the discussion of the most important works belonging to the Veda, above all, of the Saṃhitās.

### THE R̥GVEDA-SAMHITA

Indisputably the oldest and most important of all the works of Vedic literature, is the *R̥gveda-Saṃhitā*, usually called simply the '*R̥gveda*'. Of the different recensions of this Saṃhitā, which once existed, only a single one has come down to us. In the text handed down to us, this 'consisted of a collection of 1,028 hymns (Sūktas), which are divided into ten books (Maṇḍalas, 'circles').<sup>1</sup>

That this collection of hymns is the oldest, or at least contains the oldest Indian literature which we possess, is proved indisputably by the *language* of the hymns.<sup>2</sup> But the language proves also that the collection is not a single work, but consists of older and later elements. As in the *Hebrew Book of Psalms*, so here also, songs which had been composed at widely separated periods of time, were united at some time in a collection, and ascribed to famous personages of prehistoric times, preferably to the earliest ancestors of those families in which the

<sup>1</sup> It is the recension of the Sākalaka-School. Regarding editions of the text, s. above, pp. 18 f.

<sup>2</sup> Besides this there is also a purely external division, which takes into consideration only the size, namely, into eight Aṣṭakas or 'eighths,' each of which is divided into eight Adhyāyas or 'readings' which in their turn are again divided into smaller vargas or 'sections,' usually of five verses each.

<sup>3</sup> See J. Wackernagel, *Altindische Grammatik*, I, pp. xiii ff. on the language of the *R̥gveda*.

songs in question were handed down. The majority of the oldest hymns are to be found in Books II to VII, which are usually called the 'Family Books,' because each is ascribed by tradition to a particular family of singers. The names of the singers or *Ṛsis* (*i.e.*, 'seers, prophets') who, as the Indians say, visioned these hymns, are mentioned, partly in the *Brāhmaṇas*, partly in separate lists of authors (*Anukramaṇīs*) connected with the *Vedāṅga* literature. They are: *Gr̥tsamada*, *Viśvāmitra*, *Vāmadeva*, *Atri*, *Bharadvāja* and *Vasiṣṭha*. These and their descendants were regarded by the Indians as *Ṛsis* or 'seers'—we should say 'authors'—of the hymns of *Maṇḍalas* II to VII. Book VIII contains hymns, which are ascribed to the singer race of the *Kaṇvas* and that of the *Aṅgiras*. But the *Anukramaṇīs* give us also the names of the *Ṛsis* or 'authors' of every single hymn of the remaining books (I, IX, X), and it is noteworthy that there are also women's names to be found amongst them. Unfortunately, all these lists of names have practically no value at all, and in reality the authors of the Vedic hymns are quite unknown to us. For, as it has long since been proved,<sup>1</sup> the tradition which mentions *Gr̥tsamada*, *Viśvāmitra*, and so on, *and* certain of their descendants, as the *Ṛsis* of the hymns, disagrees with the statements of the hymns themselves. In the latter, *only* descendants of those ancient *Ṛsis* are mentioned as authors of the hymns; the *Ṛsis*, however, *Gr̥tsamada*, *Viśvāmitra*, *Vasiṣṭha*, and whatever they may all be called—their names are well known in the whole of Indian literature as the heroes of countless myths and legends—are already in the hymns of the *R̥gveda* the seers of a long-past prehistoric time, and are only called the *fathers* of the singer families in which the songs were handed down. Book IX gains a character of unity through the fact that it contains exclusively hymns which glorify the drink of *Soma*, and are dedicated to the god *Soma*. *Soma* is the name of a plant, out of which an intoxicating juice was pressed, which already in the Indo-Iranian time was regarded as a drink pleasing to the gods, and, therefore, plays a prominent part at the sacrifices of the

<sup>1</sup> Oldenberg, *Ueber die Liedverfasser des R̥gveda* in *ZDMG.*, Vol. 42, pp. 199 ff. Already previously A. Ludwig, *Der R̥gveda*, Vol. III, pp. xiii and 100 ff.

Indians as well as of the ancient Iranians, who called it Haôma. In ancient Indian mythology, however, the Soma drink is identified with the drink of immortality of the gods, and the seat of this divine drink is the moon, the golden-gleaming 'drop' <sup>1</sup> in the sky. Therefore, in Book IX of the *R̥gveda-Saṃhitā* Soma is celebrated not only as the sacrificial drink dear to the gods, but also as the moon, the king of the sky. As the Soma-cult extends back into the Indo-Iranian period, we can also assume a fairly high age for the songs of Book IX, which are very closely connected with Soma sacrifice. The latest parts of our collection of hymns, however, are to be found in Books I and X, which are composed of very diversified elements.<sup>2</sup> Yet that does not mean that there are not some very old hymns which have been preserved in these books, while, on the other hand, some later hymns are also scattered in the 'Family Books'. Altogether, the question as to which hymns are 'earlier' and which 'later' is not easy to decide: for the language on which this decision chiefly rests, not only varies according to the age of the hymns, but also according to their origin and purpose, according to whether they arose more in connection with the priestly cult or with the popular religion.

An incantation, for example, can differ by its 'language' from a song in praise of Soma or Indra, but it need not on that account be later.<sup>3</sup>

The so-called Khilas, which are found in a few manuscripts, represent, on the whole, a later stratum of *R̥gvedic* hymn poetry. The word Khila means 'supplement,' and this name in itself indicates that they are texts which were collected and added to the *Saṃhitā* only after the latter had already been concluded. This does not exclude the possibility

<sup>1</sup> Sanskrit 'Indu' means 'drop' and 'moon'. It is to the credit of A. Hillebrandt to have shown in his *Vedische Mythologie* (Breslau 1891 ff.) that already in the *R̥gveda*, Soma did not mean only the plant, but also the moon. In the whole of the later literature Soma is the moon.

<sup>2</sup> See A. Bergaigne, J.A., 1886-7, on the arrangement of the hymns in Books II-VII, and A. Barth, RHR., 19, 1889, 184 ff. = Oeuvres II, 8 ff. on those in Books I, VIII-X. See also Bloomfield, JAOS., 31, 1910, pp. 49 ff., for criteria for distinguishing between earlier and later hymns in the *R̥gveda*.

<sup>3</sup> See M. Bloomfield, *On the Relative Chronology of the Vedic Hymns* (JAOS., 21, 1900, pp. 42-49).

that some of these Khilas are of no less antiquity than the hymns of the *R̥gveda-Saṃhitā*, but for some reason unknown to us were not included in the collection. The eleven Vālakhilya hymns, which in all manuscripts are found at the end of Book VIII, without being included in it, are probably of this kind. Of comparatively high antiquity are probably also the eleven Suparṇa hymns, as well as the *Praīśasūktāni* and the prose *Nivīdas*, small collections of sacrificial litanies.<sup>1</sup>

However, the question as to what we are to understand by 'earlier' or by 'later' hymns, can only be treated by us at the end of this section, where we shall have to discuss the question of the age of the Veda in general. It must here suffice that the general view of the great antiquity of the *R̥gveda*, even of the 'later' parts of it, is fully justified by the fact that, as Alfred Ludwig says:<sup>2</sup> "The *R̥gveda* pre-supposes nothing of that which we know in Indian literature, while, on the other hand, the whole of Indian literature and the whole of Indian life pre-suppose the Veda."

Next to the language, however, the great age of the Vedic hymns is proved chiefly by the metres. For on the one hand, the Vedic metres are separated from those of classical Sanskrit poetry by a gulf, as in Vedic poetry there are numerous metres of which there is no trace to be found in the later poetry, while on the other hand numerous metres in classical Sanskrit poetry have no prototype in the Veda. Again, some metres of the Vedic poetry do indeed re-appear in the later poetry, but with a much more strongly marked rhythm than in the *R̥gveda*.

<sup>1</sup> The Khilas have been published by I. Scheftelowitz, *Die Apokryphen des R̥gveda* (Indische Forschungen, I), Breslau 1906. See also Scheftelowitz, ZDMG., 78, 1919, 80 ff.; 74, 1920, 192 ff.; 75, 1921, 37 ff.; ZII., 1, 1922, 50 ff.; 58 ff. Oldenberg, *Die Hymnen des R̥gveda*, I, Berlin, 1888, 504 ff., and GGA., 1907, 210 ff.; A. B. Keith, JRAS., 1907, 224 ff. The *Khila Sivasamkalpa* (edited, translated and explained by Scheftelowitz, ZDMG., 75, 1921, 201 ff.), is a regular Upaniṣad, the first part of which (1-13) is old, the rest late sectarian.

<sup>2</sup> *Der R̥gveda*, III, p. 188. Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 8. "The claim to the highest age is proved not only internally by the contents as well as the linguistic form, but externally by the fact that the Veda formed the basis of literature of the spiritual and religious life, and in the Veda again the poetical pieces are the basis of the rest, but are not based on anything themselves."

In the oldest Indian metre only the number of syllables is fixed, while the quantity of syllables is only partially determined. The Vedic verses are composed of lines of 8, 11 or 12, more rarely of 5 syllables. These lines, called Pādas,<sup>1</sup> are the units in ancient Indian metrics, and only the four (or five) last syllables are fixed with regard to the rhythm, the last syllable, however, being again a syllaba anceps. The regular form of the Pāda of eight syllables is thus :

o o o o — — —

Three such lines form the Gāyatrī and four such lines form the verse called the Anuṣṭubh. In the older poetry the Anuṣṭubh stands far behind the Gāyatrī in popularity. Later it is the reverse : the Anuṣṭubh becomes the usual verse, and out of it is developed the sloka, the proper metre of epic poetry. Metres of rarer occurrence are the Pañkti, consisting of five lines of eight syllables, and the Mahāpañkti, consisting of six such Pādas.

The line of eleven syllables has a caesura after the fourth or fifth syllable, and its regular form is as follows :

o o o o || o o o — — —

or o o o o o || o o — — —

Four such Pādas form the verse called Triṣṭubh.

The line of twelve syllables differs from that of eleven only in so far as it has one more syllable, for the rest the two metres are formed exactly alike. The regular form of the Pāda of twelve syllables is thus :

o o o o || o o o — — —

or o o o o o || o o — — —

Four such Pādas of twelve syllables give a verse which is called Jagatī.

The regular form of the line of five syllables, four or eight of which together give the verse called Dvipadā-Virāj is thus :

— — — —

<sup>1</sup> 'Pāda' means 'foot' but also 'fourth part'. The latter meaning is to be supposed here, because as a rule four Pādas make one line. The word 'pāda' has nothing to do with the 'foot' of Greek prosody. A breaking-up into such small units as the Greek 'feet' is impossible in the ancient Indian metre.

By combinations of different kinds of Pādas into *one* verse, a number of more elaborate metres are formed, as the *Uṣṇih* and *Bṛhatī* verses, composed of lines of eight or twelve syllables.

How much, in old Indian metres, everything depends on the number of syllables,<sup>1</sup> is proved by the oft-recurring speculations, in the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads, on the mystical significance of the metres, where the mysticism of numbers comes into play, when, for example, it is said, with strange logic: "The words bhūmi (earth), antarikṣa (atmosphere), and dyu (sky) form eight syllables. A Gāyatrī-Pāda consists of eight syllables. Therefore, he who knows the Gāyatrī gains the three worlds."<sup>2</sup> But that the metres play such a highly important part in the mysticism of ritual, that considered as divine beings, they even receive sacrifices,<sup>3</sup> that mythology concern itself with them, especially with the Gāyatrī, which in the form of a bird fetches the Soma from heaven, that they are *created* like other beings by Prajāpati,<sup>4</sup>—all this indicates the great age of these metres which were thought to have originated in times immemorial. Thus the age of the metres is also a proof of the age of the hymns themselves.<sup>5</sup>

The best idea, however, of the great age of these hymns is vouchsafed us by a glance at the geographical and cultural conditions of the time of which they tell us. There we see above all, that the Aryan Indians, at the time when the hymns of the *Rgveda* arose, had not nearly as yet spread over the whole of India. We find them still domiciled in the river-land of the Indus (Sindhu), the present Punjab.<sup>6</sup> From the West, over the passes

<sup>1</sup> See Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, 8, 178 f., and H. Weller *ZII.*, 1, 1922, 115 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, V, 15. Dyu is to be pronounced as 'diu'.

<sup>3</sup> *Vāsiṣṭha-Dharmasūtra*, XIII, 3 and elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> See for instance, *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, VIII, 1, 1-2. How great a rôle the metres play in the symbolism and mysticism of the ritual, may be seen from numerous passages in the liturgical Samhitās and in the Brāhmaṇas: See A. Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, 8, pp. 8 ff., 28 ff.

<sup>5</sup> See E. V. Arnold, *Vedic Metre*, Cambridge, 1905, and A. B. Keith and Arnold, *JRAS.*, 1906, 484 ff., 716 ff., 997 ff., on the metre of the *Rgveda* as a criterion of its age.

<sup>6</sup> According to E. W. Hopkins (the Punjab and the *Rgveda*, *JAOS.*, 19, 1898, 19-28) the habitations of the Aryan Indians at the time when the majority of the hymns were composed, should be sought in the neighbourhood of Amballa, between the rivers Sarasvati and Ghaggar. The rivers of the Punjab are praised in the famous 'Praise of the Rivers' (nadīstuti), *RV.* X, 75. Cf. A. Stein, *JRAS.*, 1917, 91 ff. Hertel has not

of the Hindukush, Aryan tribes had penetrated into 'the land of the five rivers,' and in the songs of the *Rgveda* we still hear of the battles which the Aryans 'had to fight with the Dasyu, or the 'black skin,' as the swarthy aboriginal inhabitants were called. Only slowly amidst continuous fighting against the hated 'non-Aryans' (anārya)—the Dasyus or Dāsas, who know no gods, no laws, and no sacrifices—do they press forward towards the East up to the Ganges. It is significant that this river, without which we can hardly imagine the India of all later periods, and which up to the present day plays such a prominent part in the poetry as well as in the popular religion of the Indians, is hardly mentioned in the *Rgveda*. Heine's lyric :

" There are sweet smells and lights by the Ganges,  
And giant trees stand there,  
And beautiful silent figures  
Are kneeling by lotus flowers, "

so suggestive of people and scenes from the period of Kālidāsa, does not in the least fit into the times of the *Rgveda*. Even the lotus-flower, which in a manner belongs to the essentials of later Indian poetry, is not yet a subject for metaphors among the Vedic singers. Altogether the animal and plant worlds in the *Rgveda* are essentially different from those of later periods. The Indian fig-tree (Nyagrodha, *Ficus indica*) is missing in the *Rgveda*. The most dreaded beast of prey of the India of to-day, the tiger, is not yet mentioned in the hymns—his home is Bengal, into which the Aryan Indians at that time had not yet penetrated. Rice—later the chief product of agriculture and the staple food of the Indians—is still quite unknown to the *Rgveda*. Only barley is planted, and at the time of the hymns agriculture as yet played only a small part. The chief source of income was cattle-rearing, and the chief cattle was the bullock. The horse also was greatly valued and, harnessed before the chariot, bore the

yet convinced me that the oldest parts of the *Rgveda* were composed in Iran and not in India (Indo-German. Forschungen, 41, 1928, p. 188).

<sup>1</sup> Sk. ārya = Avestic airya = Old Pers. ariya, 'the faithful ones', 'the people of the same race'. Herodotus (VII, 62) says that the Medes called themselves *Aryai*. Thus 'Aryan' is the common designation of Indians and Iranians. On the close relationship between the language of the Veda with the old Iranian, see above, p. 35.



warrior to the field, and, at the popular chariot-races, gained praise and glory for the victor. Again and again in the songs and invocations to the gods, the prayer for cattle and horses occurs. Also the strife amongst the hostile aboriginal inhabitants turns on the possession of cattle. Therefore, too, the old word for 'war' or 'battle' is originally 'desire for cattle' (gaviṣṭi). In the most extravagant expressions cows and bullocks<sup>1</sup> are praised as the most precious possessions. The lowing of cows hastening to the calves is looked on by the ancient Indian as the sweetest music. "The singers are shouting to the god Indra," says a poet, "as mother cows low to the calf." Gods are readily compared with bullocks, goddesses with cows. The milk of the cow was not only one of the chief articles of food, but milk and butter formed an essential part of the sacrifices to the gods. The milk was by preference consumed warm as it came from the cow, and Vedic poets marvel at the miracle that the "raw" cow gives cooked milk. As the German nursery rhyme has it:

"How can it be, O tell me now,  
'The milk is white, but red the cow,'"

so a Vedic singer praises the god Indra on account of the miracle that he has put the shining white milk into the red or black cows. However, the high esteem in which cattle were held proved no obstacle to the slaughtering of cows, and especially of bullocks, at the sacrifices, and to the eating of their flesh. An absolute prohibition of cow-killing did not exist in the oldest times, although the word 'aghnyā,' "she who is not to be killed" for 'cow' indicates that cows were killed only under exceptional circumstances.<sup>2</sup> Also the skin of the oxen was used. The tanner worked it up into leather bottles, strings of bows and straps. There were also already different kinds of industries. There was above all the wood-worker—at once carpenter, carriage-builder, and cabinet-maker—who made especially the chariot.

<sup>1</sup> It is quite similar among the Dinkas and Kaffirs in Africa, whose present form of economics must be fairly in agreement with that of the Vedic Aryans.

<sup>2</sup> See A. A. Macdonell and A. B. Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, London, 1912, II, 145 ff.

There were metal-workers, smiths, who used a bird's wings as bellows. Shipping was still in its first beginnings. A canoe provided with oars, probably consisting only of a hollowed-out tree-trunk, served for the navigation of the rivers. Although the sea was known to the Vedic Indians, it is, to say the least, highly doubtful<sup>1</sup> whether there was yet an extensive maritime trade. However, it is certain that there were traders, and that an extensive trade was carried on, in which oxen and gold ornaments took the place of money. Besides oxen and horses, the Vedic singers implore the gods chiefly for gold, which they hope to receive as gifts from the rich sacrificers.

But while we hear in the *R̥gveda* of cattle-rearing and agriculture, of trade and industry, as well as of deeds of war and of sacrifices, there is not yet to be found in the hymns that caste-division, which imparts a peculiar stamp to the whole of the social life of the Indians of later times, and which, up to the present day, has remained the curse of India. Only in one single hymn, evidently late, are the four castes—Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Sūdra—mentioned. Certainly there were warriors and priests, but of an exclusive warrior-caste there is in the *R̥gveda* as little mention as of one or several lower castes of farmers, cattle-traders, merchants, artisans, and labourers. As in later times, so indeed already in the *R̥gveda*, it was the custom that, at the king's side there stood a house-priest (Purohita) who offered the sacrifices for him. But we still hear often enough—even in the later Vedic period—of sacrifices and ceremonies, which the *pater-familias* performs alone without priestly aid. The wife takes part in these sacrifices; indeed, it is reckoned as absolutely essential, that the husband and wife together perform the sacred ceremonies. This participation of the wife in the sacrifices proves at all events that the position of woman in the oldest period of the *R̥gveda* was not yet so low as later, when the law-books absolutely forbid women to sacrifice, and to repeat sacred texts. In the *R̥gveda* (VIII, 31) we read of the married

<sup>1</sup> It is certainly not a mere accident, that in the songs of the *R̥gveda* countless similes and metaphors are drawn from cattle-rearing, while only seldom a simile refers to shipping. Contrast with this Homer's wealth of figures of speech which refer to shipping.

couple (dampatī—'householder and housewife') who "with minds in harmony press the Soma, rinse and mix it with milk" and offer adoration to the gods. Manu, however, declares in his law-book, that it is displeasing to the gods when women sacrifice (IV, 206), and that women who offer the fire-sacrifice (Agni-hotra) sink into hell (XI, 37). When we still hear in the Upaniṣads, that women also took an active share in the disputations of the philosophers, we must not wonder that in the hymns of the *Rgveda* women could without restriction—at feasts, dances, and such like—show themselves publicly. It is by no means necessary, as some scholars do, to think of courtesans, when it is said that beautiful women flock to the festival gathering. It is not to be denied, however, that already at the time of the *Rgveda*, many solitary, unprotected women—'brotherless maidens' as a poet calls them—gave themselves up to prostitution; but Pischel and Geldner,<sup>1</sup> in spite of all the trouble which they have taken to prove it, have not succeeded in proving that at that time already there existed a 'grand system of courtesans' as in the time of Buddha in Vesali, or at the time of Perikles in Athens.

However, we must not form too exalted an idea of the moral conditions in ancient India, and not picture these to ourselves in such an idyllic manner, as certainly Max Müller has at times done. We hear in the hymns of the *Rgveda* of incest, seduction, conjugal unfaithfulness, the procuring of abortion, as also of deception, theft and robbery. All this, however, proves nothing against the antiquity of the *Rgveda*. Modern ethnology knows nothing of 'unspoiled children of nature' any more than it regards all primitive peoples as rough savages or cannibal monsters. The ethnologist knows that a step-ladder of endless gradations of the most widely differing cultural conditions leads from the primitive peoples to the half-civilised peoples, and right up to the civilised nations. We need not, therefore, imagine the people of the *Rgveda* either as an innocent shepherd people, or as a horde of rough savages, nor, on the other hand, as a people of ultra-refined culture. The picture of culture which is unfolded in these songs, and which Heinrich Zimmer in his still valuable

<sup>1</sup> *Vedische Studien*, I, p. xxv.

book *Altindisches Leben* <sup>1</sup> has drawn for us in so masterly a manner, shows us the Aryan Indians as an active, joyful and warlike people, of simple, and still partly savage habits. The Vedic singers implore the gods for help against the enemy, for victory in battle, for glory and rich booty; they pray for wealth, heaps of gold and countless herds of cattle, for rain for their fields, for the blessing of children, and long life. As yet we do not find in the songs of the *Rgveda* that effeminate, ascetic and pessimistic trait of the Indian character with which we shall meet again and again in later Indian literature.

Now there have been scholars, who considered the hymns of the *Rgveda* to be so enormously old, that they thought to see in them not so much Indian as Aryan or Indo-European mental life; they held, that the epoch of these hymns was still so near to the Indo-European 'prehistoric time,' that in them we are still dealing rather with 'Aryans' than with actual Indians. On the other hand, other scholars have shown that the *Rgveda* is above all a production of the *Indian* mind, and that for its explanation no other principles must be followed than for any other text of Indian literature. This is one of the many points on which the interpreters of the *Rgveda* diverge rather widely.<sup>2</sup>

We must here remember the important fact that the *Rgveda* is as yet by no means fully explained. There are, indeed, a large number of hymns, the explanation of which is as certain as that of any other Indian text. But on the other hand, there are many hymns and very many verses and isolated passages of the *Rgveda* whose right meaning is still in the highest degree doubtful. This is also of great importance for the just appreciation of these old writings. The outsider who takes a translation of the *Rgveda* in his hand often wonders that so much in these hymns is unpoetical, indeed unintelligible and senseless. But the reason is frequently only that the translators do not content themselves with translating that which is intelligible, but that they think they *must* translate *everything*, even that which has up till now not been rightly interpreted.

<sup>1</sup> Berlin, 1879.

<sup>2</sup> See Barth, *Oeuvres*, II, 287 ff.; H. Oldenberg, *Vedaforchung*, Stuttgart, 1905; Winternitz, *WZKM.*, 19, 1905, 419 ff.

However, it is not entirely our fault, that we as yet do not rightly understand the *R̥gveda*, and that a *complete* translation of it *must* of necessity contain much that is incorrect. The reason lies in the great age of these hymns which *to the Indians themselves*, already in very early times, had become unintelligible. Within the Vedic literature we find already some verses of the *R̥gveda* misunderstood and wrongly interpreted. Already in early times Indian scholars busied themselves with the interpretation of the *R̥gveda*. So-called *Nighaṇṭus* or 'Glossaries', collections of rare and obscure words which occur in the hymns, were prepared. The first commentator of the *R̥gveda*, whose work is preserved to us, was Yāska, who on the basis of the *Nighaṇṭus*, explains a great number of Vedic verses in his work *Nirukta* (i.e., 'Etymology'). This Yāska, who doubtless is older than Pāṇini,<sup>1</sup> already quotes no less than seventeen predecessors, whose opinions frequently contradict each other. Indeed, one of the scholars quoted by Yāska declares outright that the whole Veda-exegesis is worth nothing, as the hymns are obscure, senseless, and contradictory to each other—to which Yāska, however, observes that it is not the fault of the beam if the blind man does not see it. Yāska himself, in the explanation of difficult words, often relies on the etymology (which of course does not fulfil the scientific requirements of modern philology) and frequently gives two or more different interpretations of one and the same word. It follows from this, that already in Yāska's time the sense of many words and passages of the *R̥gveda* was no longer established by an uninter-

<sup>1</sup> The great age of the *Nirukta* is proved by its language, which is more archaic than that of the remaining non-Vedic Sanskrit literature. S. Bhandarkar, JBRAS., 16; 1885, 265 f. Lakshman Sarup, *The Nighaṇṭu and the Nirukta the oldest Indian Treatise on Etymology, Philosophy and Semantics*, Introduction, Oxford, 1920, p. 54, merely reflects the universal opinion (without offering any new proofs) that Yāska lived between 700 and 500 B.C. Yāska was acquainted with all the Vedic Saṃhitās and the most important Brāhmaṇas, including the latest *Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa*, the *Prātiśākhya*s and a few of the Upaniṣads; s. Sarup, *loc. cit.*, pp. 54 f., and P. D. Gune, in *Bhandarkar Com.*, Vol., pp. 48 ff. Yāska already considered the Veda as revealed; but even in his time there were men who doubted the sanctity of the Veda (s. Sarup, *loc. cit.*, pp. 71 ff.). Satyavrata Sāmaśramin in an appendix to his edition of the *Nirukta* has an interesting treatise in Sanskrit on the age of Yāska (about 1900 B.C.) and the purpose of the *Nirukta* s. Barth, RHR., 27, 1898, 184 ff. = Oeuvres II, 94 ff. On Yāska, s. also Liechth., *Zur Einführung in die indische einheim. Sprachwiss.*, II, 22 ff.

rupted tradition. Of the work of the many successors whom Yāska has had, there is nothing preserved to us, any more than of that of his predecessors. Only from the 14th century after the birth of Christ do we possess a comprehensive commentary, which explains the *R̥gveda* word by word. This is the famous commentary of Sāyaṇa. Some of the older European interpreters of the *R̥gveda*—thus the English scholar H. H. Wilson, who has published a complete English translation of the *R̥gveda*, which entirely follows the Indian commentary—depended entirely upon Sāyaṇa's commentary, taking it for granted that the latter rested on reliable tradition. On the other hand, other Veda investigators did not trouble themselves at all about the native interpretation. They denied that a commentator, who lived more than two thousand years after the composition of the book explained by him, could know anything which we Europeans, with our philological criticism and with the modern resources of linguistic science, could not fathom and understand better. Among these investigators especially Rudolf Roth is conspicuous. One of his pupils and followers was H. Grassmann, who published in two volumes a complete metrical translation of the hymns of the *R̥gveda*.<sup>1</sup> Most of the investigators to-day take up an intermediary position. While admitting that we must not blindly follow the native interpreters, they yet believe that the latter did *partly* at least, draw upon an uninterrupted tradition and, therefore, should not be disregarded, and that simply because they are Indians and, therefore, better acquainted with the Indian atmosphere, as it were, than we Westerners, they often hit the right meaning. Among these interpreters is Alfred Ludwig, who, in his complete German translation of the *R̥gveda*, to which is added a comprehensive, most valuable commentary,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Leipzig, 1876 and 1877. The selection "Siebenzig Lieder des *R̥gveda* übersetzt von Karl Geldner und Adolf Kaegi. Mit Beiträgen von R. Roth." Tübingen, 1875, which also proceeded from Roth's school, is much preferable to Grassmann's translation.

<sup>2</sup> Prag, 1876-1888, in six volumes. Though difficult to understand, Ludwig's translation is yet more reliable than the smooth verses in the translation of Grassmann. A good English translation is that of R. T. H. Griffith, Benares, 1889-1892. Selections from the *R̥gveda* are translated into English by Max Müller and Oldenberg in SBE., Vols. 32 and 46; into German by K. F. Geldner, in A. Bertholet, *Religionsgeschichtliches Lesebuch* (Tübingen, 1908) p. 71 ff. : A Hillebrandt, *Lieder des *R̥gveda**, Göttingen, 1913 : into English A. A. Macdonell, *Hymns from the *R̥gveda** (Heritage of India Series); and

for the first time thoroughly utilized the explanations of Sāyana, without rejecting other aids to interpretation. He is a forerunner of R. Pischel and K. F. Geldner, who, in their *Vedische Studien*<sup>1</sup> have rendered invaluable services to the clearing-up of many obscure passages of the *R̥gveda*. They have also clung most firmly—certainly not without exaggeration—to the principle that the *R̥gveda* must, above all, be interpreted as a production of the Indian mind, to the right understanding of which the Indian literature of later periods provides the best key.

Added to all this is yet another much-debated question, which is of no little importance for the interpretation of the Vedic hymns, namely the question whether these hymns arose independently of all sacrificial ritual as the naive expressions of a pious faith in the gods, as the outpouring of the hearts of divinely inspired singers, or whether they were, in a workmanlike manner, composed by priests, merely with the intention of using them for certain sacrifices and ceremonies.

But how differently these songs may be judged according to the line of interpretation taken by a scholar may be shown by contrasting the opinions of two eminent scholars. In his beautiful book, which is still worth reading, “*Der R̥gveda, die älteste Litteratur der Inder*,”<sup>2</sup> Ad. Kaegi says of the hymns of the *R̥gveda*: “The great majority of the songs are invocations and glorifications of the deities addressed at the time; their keynote is throughout a simple outpouring of the heart, a prayer to the Eternal Ones, an invitation to accept favourably the piously dedicated gift. . . . To that which a god placed in his soul and caused him to feel: to the impulse of his heart the singer wishes to give eloquent expression.” He admits that also

E. J. Thomas, *Vedic Hymns* (Wisdom of the East Series), London, 1923. The first part of a new and complete translation of the *R̥gveda* by K. F. Geldner has been published in the series *Quellen der Religionsgeschichte*, Göttingen, 1923.

<sup>1</sup> Stuttgart, 1889-1901, 3 vols. Other important contributions to the interpretation of the *R̥gveda* are: Oldenberg, *R̥gveda, Textkritische und exegetische Noten*, AGGW., N.F., Vol. XI, No. 5, and Vol. XIII, No. 3, 1909 and 1912; Geldner, *Der R̥gveda in Auswahl*, I. Glossar, II Kommentar, Stuttgart, 1907-09, and ZDMG., 71, 1917, 315 ff. M. Bloomfield, JAOS., 27, 1906, 72 ff.; E. W. Fay, *ibid.*, 403 ff.; A. B. Keith, JRAS., 1910, 921 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Second edition, Leipzig, 1881. An English translation (*The R̥gveda, the Oldest Literature of the Indians*) with additions, by H. Arrowsmith, appeared in 1886.

portions of inferior quality are to be found in the collection, "but there is in them all a fresh breath of vigorous primeval poetry. Whoever takes the trouble to transfer himself to the religious and moral thought and action, the poetry and the working of a people and age, in which the first spiritual development of our own race is placed before our eyes at its best, will feel himself attracted in various ways by many of these songs, here through the childlike simplicity, there through the freshness or delicacy of feeling and in other parts by the boldness of metaphor, by the flight of the imagination." Now let us hear what H. Oldenberg, the ingenious and judicious expert on Indian literature, says about these songs in his *Religion des Veda*.<sup>1</sup> He sees already in this "oldest document of Indian literature and religion" "the clear trace of an ever-increasing intellectual enervation." He speaks of the "sacrificial songs and litanies, with which the priests of the Vedic Aryan on a temple-less place of sacrifice, at the sacrificial fires strewn around with grass, invoked their gods—barbarian priests—the barbarian gods, who with horses and chariots came driving through the sky and air in order to feast on the sacrificial cake, butter, and meat, and to imbibe, with the intoxicating soma juice, courage and divine strength. The singers of the *Rgveda*, in a manner inherited of old, composing for the great and pompous . . . Soma-sacrifice, do not want to tell of the god whom they are honouring, but they want to praise this god. . . . So they heap upon him all the glorifying epithets which are at the disposal of the grossly flattering garrulousness of an imagination which loves the bright and the garish." "Such poetry", Oldenberg thinks, "could have arisen only in the exclusive circles of the priestly sacrificial experts."

To me both these opinions seem exaggerated, and the truth, in my opinion, here as in all the debatable questions regarding the interpretation of the *Rgveda*, lies midway. Let us remember that the hymn-collection of the *Rgveda* is composed of earlier and later portions. Just as there are hymns in the *Samhitā*, which belong to different periods of time, so also in



contents the hymns are of greatly varying value and of different origin. There is no doubt that a great number of these hymns arose independently of all sacrificial ritual, and that in them the breath of genuine primeval religious poetry is felt.<sup>1</sup> Even if many of these hymns were used later on for sacrificial purposes, that does not in the least prove that they were originally written for this purpose. On the other hand, it is equally certain that very many portions of the *Rgveda-Saṃhitā* were from the first intended for nothing but sacrificial songs and litanies, and were glued together in a rather workmanlike fashion by priestly singers. It is also certainly exaggerated when W. D. Whitney<sup>2</sup> once said: "The Vedas appear rather like an Indo-European than an Indian record." But just as certainly is it an exaggeration when Pischel and Geldner (with H. H. Wilson) state that the Indians at the time of the *Rgveda*, had already attained a degree of culture, which was little different from that which Alexander the Great found in existence at the time of his invasion of India.<sup>3</sup>

Although the gulf which divides the hymns of the *Rgveda* from the rest of Indian literature may perhaps not be so wide as many older investigators have supposed, a gulf still exists.<sup>4</sup> This is proved by the language, by the cultural conditions indicated above, and most particularly by the stage of religious development, which we meet with in the hymns. So much is certain, that, whatever the poetical value of the songs of the *Rgveda* may be, there exists no more important source for the investigation of the earliest stages in the development of Indian religion, no more important literary source for the investigation of the mythology of the Indo-

<sup>1</sup> Enthusiasm should not, however, be allowed to obscure calm criticism, as is the case with H. Brunnhofer, who (in his essay *Ueber den Geist der indischen Lyrik*, Leipzig, 1882) makes the author of one of the later philosophical hymns of the *Rgveda* "A prince of poets towering up out of the mists of primitive times" (p. 15) and is carried away into saying that "the Veda is like the lark's morning trill, of humanity awakening to the consciousness of its greatness" (p. 41). That the *Veda* certainly is not!

<sup>2</sup> *Language and its Study*, London, 1876, p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> *Vedische Studien*, I, pp. xxii, xxvi.

<sup>4</sup> See also A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, II, 8.

European peoples, indeed, of peoples in general, than these songs of the *R̥gveda*.

To say it in a word : what renders these hymns so valuable for us is that we see before us in them a mythology in the making.<sup>1</sup> We see gods, as it were, arising before our eyes. Many of the hymns are not addressed to a sun-god, nor to a moon-god, nor to a fire-god, nor to a god of the heavens, nor to storm-gods and water-deities, nor to a goddess of the dawn and an earth-goddess, but the shining sun itself, the gleaming moon in the nocturnal sky, the fire blazing on the hearth or on the altar or even the lightning shooting forth from the cloud, the bright sky of day, or the starry sky of night, the roaring storms, the flowing waters of clouds and of rivers, the glowing dawn and the spread-out fruitful earth—all these natural phenomena are, as such, glorified, worshipped, and invoked. Only gradually is accomplished in the songs of the *R̥gveda* itself, the transformation of these natural phenomena into mythological figures, into gods and goddesses such as Sūrya (Sun), Soma (Moon), Agni (Fire), Dyaus (Sky), Maruts (Storms), Vāyu (Wind), Āpas (Waters), Uṣas (Dawn), and Pṛthivī (Earth), whose names still indubitably indicate what they originally were. So the songs of the *R̥gveda* prove indisputably that the most prominent figures of mythology have proceeded from personifications of the most striking natural phenomena. Mythological investigation has succeeded, also in the cases of the deities whose names are no longer so transparent, in proving that they originally were nothing but just natural phenomena similar to sun, moon, and so on. Among such mythological figures, whose original nature is already partly forgotten in the hymns, and who are honoured more as mighty, lofty beings, distinguished through all kinds of miraculous deeds,

<sup>1</sup> L. de la Vallée Poussin (*Le Védisme*, Paris, 1909, pp. 61 ff., 68), contests this view that the Veda presents 'a mythology in the making' and A. B. Keith, *JRAS.*, 1909, p. 469, agrees with him. But I did not mean to say that all mythology first arose at the time of the *R̥gveda-Saṃhitā*. The beginnings of the Vedic system of mythology and religion doubtless belong to a far earlier period than the compilation of the *Saṃhitā*. Those hymns, however, in which the natural phenomena and the deities embodied in them are as yet scarcely distinguished from one another, hark back to the time of the beginnings of Vedic mythology. This, of course, does not assume that the same thing is true of the whole *Saṃhitā*, or of the whole of Vedic religion.

are Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aditi, Viṣṇu, Pūṣan, the two Aśvins, Rudra and Parjanya. These gods' names, too, originally indicated natural phenomena, and natural beings. Epithets, which at first emphasized a particularly important side of a natural being, became gods' names and new gods. Thus Savitar, the 'inspirer,' 'the life-giver,' and Vivasvat, 'the shining,' were at first epithets, then names of the sun, and finally they became independent sun-gods beside Sūrya. Also the gods of different tribes and different periods are in many ways represented in the polytheism of the Vedic Indians.<sup>1</sup> Hence it is that Mitra, Viṣṇu and Pūṣan also appear in the *R̥gveda* as sun-gods. Pūṣan was probably the sun-god of a small shepherd-tribe, before he was received into the Vedic pantheon as the 'Lord of the ways,' the protector of travellers, the god who knows all the paths and also brings back to the right path the cattle which have strayed. Mitra, who is identical with the Mithra of the *Āvestā*, is through this fact already distinguishable as an ancient Aryan sun-god, who still hails from the time when Indians and Iranians formed one people. It is not so easy with all gods to discover to which natural phenomenon they owe their origin. Still the opinions of investigators differ widely in the explanation of gods like Indra, Varuṇa, Rudra, Aditi, and the Aśvins—to mention only the most important ones. Thus, to one, Indra is the god of the storm, to the other an old sun-god. Varuṇa is to some a god of the heavens, while others see in him a moon-god. Rudra, who is usually held to be a storm-god, because he is the father of the storm-gods (the Maruts), would be, according to Oldenberg, a mountain and forest god, according to Hillebrandt "a god of the horrors of the tropical climate".<sup>2</sup> Aditi is, according to one view, the expanse of the sky, according to another the endless, widespreading earth. The two Aśvins, a pair of gods who are doubtless related to the Greek Dioskuri, and also reappear in Germanic and Lettic mythology, were already before Yāska a puzzle to the ancient Indian commentators.

<sup>1</sup> See A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, II, 14 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See now the learned dissertation by E. Arbman, *Rudra Untersuchungen zum altindischen Glauben und Kultus*, Uppsala, 1922. He sees in Rudra a primitive popular deity, the prototype of Śiva.

Some held them to be heaven and earth, others day and night, and still to-day some scholars see in them the two twilights, others sun and moon, yet others the morning and evening star, and again others the constellation of Gemini.<sup>1</sup> But what is the most important is that most mythologists to-day agree that by far the greatest majority of the Vedic gods has proceeded from natural phenomena or natural beings.<sup>2</sup> There were, indeed, some deities that have become divine beings out of abstractions, but they nearly all appear only in the latest hymns of the tenth book; thus Viśvakarman = 'the word master-builder,' Prajāpati = 'the lord of creatures,' or Śraddhā = 'faith,' Manyu = 'anger,' and some similar personifications. More important are certain gods of the so-called 'lower' mythology, who also appear in the *Rgveda*: the R̥bhus, who correspond with the elves, the Apsaras, who correspond with the nymphs, and the Gandharvas, who are a kind of forest and field spirits.<sup>3</sup> Numerous demons and evil spirits too appear in the hymns as enemies of the gods, who are hated and fought against by the Devas or gods. The name Asura, however, by which in the later Vedic works these enemies of the gods are designated, appears in the *Rgveda* still with the old meaning 'possessed of wonderful power' or 'god,'<sup>3</sup> which the corresponding word 'Abura' has in the *Āvestā*, and only in a few places also with the meaning of demons. In the *Rgveda* Dāsa or Dasyu—thus the non-Aryan aboriginal inhabi-

<sup>1</sup> This is not the place to express an opinion on all the controversial questions which concern Vedic mythology. The best representation of the *facts* of Vedic mythology is given by A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (in the "Grundriss" III, I, A.). Whoever desires information with reference to the *explanation* of the myths and religious belief of the ancient Indians, must at all events consult both H. Oldenberg's *Religion des Veda* (Berlin, 1894) and also A. Hillebrandt's *Vedische Mythologie* (3 vols., Breslau, 1891-1902). Different as are the results arrived at by the two investigators, both have greatly contributed to the extension and deepening of our knowledge of the Vedic religion. Even the outsider, however, must be quite clear that, in these questions, absolute truth can never be attained, in fact can always only be approached more or less closely. Great services have been rendered to the investigation of Vedic religion and still more to the explanation of the hymns of the *Rgveda*, by the French scholar Abel Bergaigne (*La religion védique d'après les hymnes du Rgveda*, 3 vols., Paris, 1878-1883).

<sup>2</sup> Sten Konow, *The Aryan Gods of the Mitani People*, Kristiania, 1921, p. 5, has not convinced me, "that the conception of Vedic religion as a worship of nature and natural phenomena is fundamentally wrong."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, pp. 162 ff.; V. K. Rajwade, *Proc.*, IOC., II, pp. 1 ff.

*tants also are called—is the usual name for the evil demons, besides also Rakṣas or Rākṣasas, by which, in the Ṛgveda, as well as in the whole of the later Indian literature, all kinds of mischievous, ghostly beings are designated. Also the Pitaras, the ‘fathers’ or ancestral spirits, already in the Ṛgveda<sup>1</sup> received divine worship. The king of these ancestral spirits, who rules in the kingdom of the deceased, high up in the highest heaven, is Yama, a god who belongs already to the Indo-Iranian prehistoric period; for he is identical with Yima who, in the *Āvestā*, is the first human being, the primeval ancestor of the human race. As the first departed one—perhaps originally the daily setting sun or the monthly dying moon—he became the king in the realm of the dead. This kingdom of the dead is in the heavens, and the dying man is comforted by the belief that after death he will abide with King Yama in the highest heaven. Of the dismal belief in the ‘transmigration of the soul and eternal rebirth—the belief which controls the whole philosophical thought of Indians in later centuries—there is, in the *Ṛgveda*, as yet no trace to be found. So we see here too, that in these hymns there breathes an entirely different spirit from that which pervades the whole of the later Indian literature.*

Just these important differences between the religious views which appear in the songs of the *Ṛgveda* and those of the succeeding period prove also that these songs do as a matter of fact reflect the popular belief of the old Aryan Indians. Though it is true that the songs of the *Ṛgveda* cannot really be called ‘popular poetry,’ that—for the most part at least—they arose in certain singer-families, in narrow priestly circles, yet we must not think that these priests and singers created a mythology and a system of religion without any consideration of the popular belief. Certainly there may be some things that are told of the gods, which rest only on “momentary fancies of the individual poet,” but on the whole we must take for granted that these priests and singers started from popular tradition, that they, as Hillebrandt aptly says, “stood above, but not outside, the people”.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Olfenborg, *Aus Indien und Iran*, p. 19; *Religion des Veda*, p. 18; Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, II, 4.

Thus, then, these songs are of incalculable value to us as evidence of the oldest religious faith of the Aryan Indians. As works of poetic art, too, they deserve a prominent place in the world literature. It is true, the authors of these hymns rise but extremely seldom to the exalted flights and the deep fervour of, say, the religious poetry of the Hebrews. The Vedic singer does not look up to the god whom he honours in song, with that shuddering awe and that faith, firm as a rock, with which the Psalmist looks up to *Jehovāh*. The prayers of the priestly singers of ancient India do not, as with the former, rise from the inmost soul to the heavenly ones. These poets stand on a more familiar footing with the gods whom they honour in song. When they sing a song of praise to a god, then they expect him to present them with wealth in cows and hero-sons, and they are not afraid to tell him this. “*Do, ut des,*” is the standpoint which they hold. Thus a Vedic poet says to the god Indra : (*Rv.* VIII, 14. 1, 2) :

“ If I, O Indra, were like thee,  
Lord of all the goods that be,  
My worshipper should never lack  
For herds to call his own.

Gifts would I bestow on him,  
On that wise singer blessings shower,  
If I, as thou, O lord of power,  
The Master of the cattle were.”

And another poet addresses the god Agni with the following words (*Rv.* VIII, 19. 25, 26) :

“ If thou wert mortal, Agni, and I the immortal one,  
Thou son of strength, like Mitra, to whom we sacrifice,  
Thee would I not expose to curse, good God!  
My worshipper should not suffer poverty, neglect, or harm.”

Yet the character of the hymns—and I am now speaking of those which contain invocations or songs of praise to the gods, without being composed for definite sacrificial purposes—is very different, according to the deities to which they are dedicated. Amongst the loftiest and most inspired poems are indisputably the

*songs to Varuṇa. There are indeed not many of them. Varuṇa, however, is the only one amongst the Vedic gods, who stands nobly elevated above mortals, whom the poet ventures to approach only with trembling and fear, and in humble reverence. Varuṇa it is, too, who concerns himself more than any other god of the Vedic pantheon with the moral ways of men and punishes the sinners. Contritely, therefore, the poet approaches him and pleads for forgiveness of his sins. Thus the hymns addressed to Varuṇa are the only ones which lend themselves, to a certain extent, to comparison with the poetry of the *Psalms*. As a specimen I give the hymn *Rv.* V, 85 in the translation of R. T. H. Griffith :*

“ Sing forth a hymn sublime and solemn, grateful to glorious  
Varuṇa, imperial Ruler,  
Who hath struck out, like one who slays the victim, earth as a  
skin to spread in front of Sūrya

In the tree-tops the air he hath extended, put milk in kine and  
vigorous speed in horses,  
Set intellect in hearts, fire in the waters,<sup>1</sup> Sūrya in heaven and  
Soma on the mountain.

Varuṇa lets the big cask, opening downward, flow through the  
heaven and earth and air's mid-region.  
Therewith the universe's Sovran waters earth as the shower of  
rain bedews the barley.

When Varuṇa is fain for milk he moistens the sky, the land, and  
earth to her foundation.  
Then straight the mountains clothe them in the rain-cloud: the  
Heroes, putting forth their vigour, loose them.<sup>2</sup>

I will declare this mighty deed of magic, of glorious Varuṇa the  
Lord Immortal,  
Who standing in the firmament hath meted the earth out with  
the Sun as with a measure.

<sup>1</sup> Namely, the lightning in the cloud.

<sup>2</sup> The milk is the water of the clouds which are compared with cows. The 'strong men' are the storm-gods (Maruts) who, in the storm, cause the 'milk' of the clouds to flow.

None, verily, hath ever let or hindered this the most wise God's  
mighty deed of magic,  
Whereby with all their flood, the lucid rivers fill not one sea  
wherein they pour their waters.

If we have sinned against the man who loves us, have ever wronged  
a brother, friend, comrade,  
The neighbour ever with us, or a stranger, O Varuṇa, remove  
from us the trespass.

If we, as gamesters cheat at play, have cheated, done wrong  
unwittingly or sinned of purpose,  
Cast all these sins away like loosened fetters, and, Varuṇa, let us  
be thine own beloved."

Varuṇa, too, already in the *Rgveda*, is, as he is in the later  
mythology, the god of the sea, a god of the waters, and, therefore,  
he punishes people who have sinned, particularly with dropsy.  
A simple prayer by one who is suffering from dropsy is  
*Rv.* VII, 89. I give it in the translation of R. T. H. Griffith :

"Let me not yet, King Varuṇa, enter into the house of clay<sup>1</sup>:  
Have mercy, spare me, Mighty Lord.

When, Thunderer! I move along tremulous like a wind-blown skin,  
Have mercy, spare me, Mighty Lord.

O Bright and Powerful God, through want of strength I erred  
and went astray:  
Have mercy, spare me, Mighty Lord.

Thirst found thy worshipper though he stood in the midst of  
water-floods:  
Have mercy, spare me, Mighty Lord.

O Varuṇa, whatever the offence may be which we as men commit  
against the heavenly host,  
When through our want of strength we violate thy laws, punish  
us not, O God, for that iniquity."

Quite a different note is struck in the songs to the god  
Indra. Indra can be designated as the actual national god of

<sup>1</sup> The grave, or the earthen urn in which the ashes of the cremated corpse are preserved, may be meant. On the methods of burial of the ancient Indians, see below, pp. 88 ff.



the Vedic Indians. As, however, the Indians at the time of the *Rgveda*, were still a fighting and struggling nation, so Indra is a thoroughly warlike god. His enormous strength and combativeness are described again and again, and fondly the Vedic singers dwell on the battles of Indra with the demons, whom he destroys with his thunderbolt. Especially, the battle of Indra with Vṛtra is celebrated by songs in numerous hymns. Again and again the splendid victory is spoken of, which the god achieved over the demon; countless times Indra is praised exultingly, because he slew Vṛtra with his thunderbolt. Vṛtra (probably 'the Obstructor') is a demon in the form of a serpent or a dragon, who keeps the waters enclosed or imprisoned in a mountain. Indra wants to release the waters. With Soma he imbibes courage, hastens to the battle, and slays the monster—now the released waters flow in a rapid stream over the corpse of Vṛtra. This great deed of Indra is graphically described in the song *Rv.* I, 32, which begins with the verses <sup>1</sup>:

“ I will proclaim the manly deeds of Indra,  
The first that he performed, the lightning-wielder.  
He slew the serpent, then discharged the waters,  
And cleft the caverns of the lofty mountains.

He slew the serpent lying on the mountain:  
For him the whizzing bolt has Tvaṣṭar fashioned.  
Like lowing cows, with rapid current flowing,  
The waters to the ocean down have glided.”

The songs leave no doubt that the myth of Indra's dragon-fight refers to some powerful natural phenomenon. Heaven and earth tremble when Indra slays Vṛtra. He does not destroy the dragon *once* only, but repeatedly, and he is invited also in the future always to kill Vṛtra, and to release the waters. Already the old Indian Veda-interpreters tell us that Indra is a god of the thunder-storm, and that by the mountains in which the waters are enclosed, we are to understand the clouds, in which Vṛtra—the demon of drought—keeps the waters imprisoned. Most of the European mythologists agreed with this opinion and

<sup>1</sup> Translated by A. A. Macdonell, *Hymns from the Rgveda*, p. 47.

saw in Indra, armed with a thunderbolt, a counterpart of the Teutonic Thunar, who swings the thunder-hammer *Mjölhnir*, a thunder-god reaching back into the Indo-European prehistoric period, and in the dragon-fight a mythological representation of the thunder-storm. Hillebrandt, however, has tried to prove that *Vṛtra* is not a cloud-demon and not a demon of drought, but a winter-giant whose power is broken by the sun-god Indra; the 'rivers' which are imprisoned by *Vṛtra* and set free by Indra, are, according to him, not the torrents of rain, but the rivers of the North-West of India which dry up in winter and are re-filled only when the sun causes the masses of snow of the Himalaya mountains to melt.

However that may be, it is certain that the Vedic singers themselves had no clear consciousness of the original meaning of Indra and *Vṛtra* as nature-gods. For them Indra was a powerful champion, a giant of enormous strength, but *Vṛtra* the most dreaded of the demons, which were believed to be embodied in the black aborigines of the land. For Indra does not fight only with *Vṛtra*, but with numerous other demons. His demon-fights are only a copy of the battles which the Aryan immigrants had to fight. Therefore, too, Indra is above all a god of warriors. Of none of the gods of the Vedic pantheon are so many individual traits given us, none is portrayed so 'true to life'—if one may use the expression with reference to a deity—as this warlike god in the 250 hymns which are dedicated to him. Big and strong are his arms. With beautiful lips he quaffs the Soma-drink, and when he has drunk, he moves his jawbones with pleasure, and shakes his fair beard. Fair as gold is his hair, and his whole appearance. He is a giant in stature,—heaven and earth would not be large enough to serve him as a girdle. In strength and vigour no heavenly nor earthly being approaches him. When he grasped the two endless worlds, they were for him only a handful. He is called by preference a bull. Boundless as his strength, is also his power of drinking, which is described, often not without humour, in the songs. Before he slew *Vṛtra*, he drank three ponds of soma; and once it is even said that he drank, in one gulp, thirty ponds of soma juice. Scarcely was he born—and his birth was no ordinary one, for still in his mother's womb

he said: "I do not want to go out here, that is a bad way; across, through the side, I will go out" (*Rv.* IV, 18, 2)—when he already drank goblets of soma. Sometimes, too, he did too much of a good thing. In the song *Rv.* X, 119, a poet brings before us the intoxicated Indra, uttering a monologue and considering what he is to do—"Thus I will do it, no, thus". "I will place the earth here, no, I will place it there", and so on—where each verse ends with the significant refrain "Have I, then, drunk of the Soma?"

This warlike national god is much more suitable than any other to be the chief of gods. Although in the *Rgveda* almost every god is at some time or another praised as the first and highest of all gods—this is a sort of flattery, by means of which one wants to incline the god in one's favour, similarly to the way in which later court poets have celebrated many a petty prince as the ruler of the world—Indra is, in the earliest times, undoubtedly a king among the gods, like Zeus of the Greek Olympus.

As chief of gods he is celebrated in the song *Rv.* II, 12, which as a specimen of an Indra song, may here be given in the translation of A. A. Macdonell:

"He who just born as chief god full of spirit  
Went far beyond the other gods in wisdom:  
Before whose majesty and mighty manhood  
The two worlds trembled: he, O men, is Indra.

Who made the widespread earth when quaking steadfast  
Who set at rest the agitated mountains,  
Who measured out air's middle space more widely,  
Who gave the sky support: he, men, is Indra.

Who slew the serpent, freed the seven rivers,  
Who drove the cattle out from Vala's cavern,<sup>2</sup>  
Who fire between two rocks has generated,  
A conqueror in fights: he, men, is Indra.

<sup>1</sup> *Hymns from the Rgveda*, pp 48 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Next to the Vṛtra-killing this deliverance of the cows is the greatest heroic deed of Indra. It has been compared—I think, rightly—with the deed of Hercules, who kills the three-headed Ceryoneus and leads away the herds of oxen stolen by him. In the same way Hercules and Carus. Cf. Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, p. 148 f. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, III, 260 ff.

*He who has made all earthly things unstable,  
Who humbled and dispersed the Dasa colour,  
Who, as the player's stake the winning gambler,  
The foeman's fortune gains: he, men, is Indra.*

*Of whom, the terrible, they ask, "Where is he?"  
Of him, indeed, they also say, "he is not."  
The foeman's wealth, like player's stakes, he lessens.  
Believe in him: for he, O men, is Indra.*

*He furthers worshippers, both rich and needy,  
And priests that supplicate his aid and praise him.  
Who, fair-lipped, helps the man that presses Soma,  
That sets the stones at work: he, men, is Indra.*

*In whose control are horses and all chariots,  
In whose control are villages and cattle;  
He who has generated sun and morning,  
Who leads the waters: he, O men, is Indra.*

*Whom two contending armies vie in calling,  
On both sides foes, the farther and the nearer;  
Two fighters mounted on the self-same chariot <sup>1</sup>  
Invoke him variously: he, men, is Indra.*

*Without whose aid men conquer not in battle,  
Whom fighting ever they invoke for succour,  
Who shows himself a match for every foeman.  
Who moves what is unmoved: he, men, is Indra.*

*Who with his arrow slays the unexpected  
Unnumbered crew of gravely guilty sinners;  
Who yields not to the boasting foe in boldness,  
Who slays the demons: he, O men, is Indra.*

*He who detected in the fortieth autumn  
Sambara <sup>2</sup> dwelling far among the mountains;  
Who slew the serpent that put forth his vigour,  
The demon as he lay: he, men, is Indra.*

<sup>1</sup> Namely, the warrior and the charioteer.

<sup>2</sup> Name of a demon.

Who with his seven rays, the bull, the mighty,<sup>1</sup>  
 Let loose the seven streams to flow in torrents;  
 Who, bolt in arm, spurned Rauhiṇa, the demon,  
 On scaling heaven bent: he, men, is Indra.

Both Heaven and Earth, themselves, bow down before him;  
 Before his might the very mountains tremble,  
 Who, famed as Soma-drinker, armed with lightning,  
 Is wielder of the bolt: he, men, is Indra.

Who with his aid helps him that presses Soma,  
 That bakes and lauds and ever sacrifices;<sup>2</sup>  
 Whom swelling prayer, whom Soma pressings strengthen,  
 And now this offering: he, O men, is Indra.

Who, fierce, on him that bakes and him that presses  
 Bestowest booty: thou, indeed, art trusted,  
 May we, for ever dear to thee, O Indra,  
 Endowed with hero sons address the Synod."

While the hymns of Varuṇa and Indra show us that the Vedic poets are not lacking in pathos, vigour and raciness the songs to Agni, the fire or the fire-god, show us that these poets also often succeeded in touching the simple, warm, heart-felt tone. Agni, as the sacrificial fire and as the fire which blazes on the hearth, is esteemed as the friend of mortals; he is the mediator between them and the gods, and to him the poet speaks as to a dear friend. He prays to him, that he may bless him 'as the father his son,' and he takes for granted that the god is pleased with his song and will fulfil the wish of the singer. While Indra is the god of the warrior, Agni is the god of the householder, who protects his wife and children for him, and makes his homestead prosper. He himself is often called 'master of the house' (grhapati). He is the 'guest' of every house, 'the first of all guests'. As an immortal being he has taken up his abode amongst mortals; and in his hand lies the prosperity of the family. Since primitive times, the bride,

<sup>1</sup> Indra has a chariot provided with seven reins (*Rv.* II, 18, I; VI, 44, 24), i.e., many horses—'seven' in the *Rgveda* often means 'many'—are harnessed to his chariot.

<sup>2</sup> These are the four sacrificial priests of the older period.

when she came to her new home, was led around the sacred fire, and therefore Agni is also called "the lover of maidens, the husband of women" (*Rv.* 1, 66, 8), and in a marriage benediction it is said that Agni is the husband of the maidens, and that the bridegroom receives the bride from Agni. Simple prayers are also addressed to him at the wedding, at the birth of children, and similar family events. During the marriage-sacrifice the prayer was offered on behalf of the bride: "May Agni, the lord of the house, protect her! May he lead her offspring on to a high age; may her womb be blessed, may she be the mother of living children. May she behold the joy of her sons!" As the sacrificial fire, Agni is 'the between gods and mortals; and sometimes it is said that, as such, he bears the sacrificial food up to the gods, sometimes also that he brings the gods down to the sacrifice. Therefore, he is also called the priest, the wise One, the Brahman, the Purohita (family priest) and by preference the title Hotar—the name of the chief priest at the great sacrifice—is given to him. Beginnings of mythology and poetic art can hardly be separated, especially in the songs to Agni. By means of abundant pourings of *ghee* the sacrificial fire was maintained in a state of radiant flame, and the poet says: Agni's countenance shines, or his back shines, his hair drips with *ghee*. When he is described as flame-haired, or red-haired, red-bearded, with sharp jawbones and golden gleaming teeth, when the flames of the fire are spoken of as Agni's tongues, when the poet, thinking of the bright fire radiating in all directions, calls Agni four-eyed or thousand-eyed, then all this may be called poetry just as well as mythology. Thus also the rattling and rustling of the fire is compared with the bellowing of a bull,<sup>1</sup>—and Agni is called a bull. The pointed, rising flames are imagined as horns, and a singer calls Agni "provided with a thousand horns," while another one says that he sharpens his horns and shakes them in anger. Just as frequently, however, Agni is also compared with a merrily neighing horse, a 'fiery runner'; and in mythology as well as in religious worship, Agni stands in close connection with the horse. But, when Agni is also called the bird, the eagle

<sup>1</sup> In English, too, we speak of the 'roaring fire'.

of heaven, hastening along in rapid flight between heaven and earth, then we must think of the flame of the lightning which descends from the sky. Again, another appearance of fire is in the mind of the poet when he says (*Rv.* I, 143, 5): "Agni, with his sharp jaws, devours the forests; he masticates them, he lays them low as the warrior his foes." Similarly, another poet (*Rv.* I, 65, 8): "When fanned by the wind, he has spread through the forests, Agni cuts off the hair of the earth" (*i.e.*, grass and herbs).

Even the actual Agni-myths have only originated in the metaphorical and enigmatic language of the poets. Agni has three births or three birthplaces: in the sky he glows as the fire of the sun, on the earth he is brought forth by mortals out of the two pieces of tinder wood, and as the lightning he is born in the water. As he is brought forth with the help of two pieces of tinder wood (*Araṇis*), it is said that he has two mothers,—and "scarcely is the child born, when he devours the two mothers" (*Rv.* X, 79, 4). An older poet, however, says: "Ten indefatigable virgins have brought forth this child of *Tvaṣṭar* (*i.e.*, Agni)" (*Rv.* I, 95, 2), by which are meant the ten fingers, which had to be employed in the twirling; and as it was only possible through great exertion of strength to bring the fire out of the pieces of wood by friction, Agni in the whole of the *Rgveda* is called 'the son of strength'.

With the extensive part which the fire-cult played among the ancient Indians, it is not to be wondered at, that the majority of the numerous songs in the *Rgveda* which are dedicated to Agni—there are about two hundred of them—have been used as songs of sacrifice, many of them having only been composed for sacrificial purposes. Yet we find among these songs many plain, simple prayers, which, perhaps, are the work of priests, but certainly are the work of poets. As an example I give the first hymn of our *Rgveda-Saṃhitā* in the translation of A. A. Macdonell:<sup>1</sup>

"Agni I praise, the household priest,  
God, minister of sacrifice,  
Invoker, best bestowing wealth.

<sup>1</sup> *Hymns from the Rgveda*, pp. 72 f.

Agni is worthy to be praised,  
By present as by seers of old:  
May he to us conduct the gods.

Through Agni may we riches gain,  
And day by day prosperity  
Replete with fame and manly sons.

The worship and the sacrifice,  
Guarded by thee on every side,  
Go straight, O Agni, to the gods.

May Agni, the invoker, wise  
And true, of most resplendent fame,  
The god, come hither with the gods.

Whatever good thou wilt bestow,  
O Agni, on the pious man,  
That gift comes true, O Angiras.

To thee, O Agni, day by day,  
O thou illuminer of gloom,  
With thought we, bearing homage, come:

To thee the lord of sacrifice,  
The radiant guardian of the Law,  
That growest in thine own abode.

So, like a father to his son,  
Be easy of approach to us;  
Agni, for weal abide with us."

Some pearls of lyric poetry, which appeal to us as much through their fine comprehension of the beauties of Nature, as through their flowery language, are to be found among the songs to Sūrya (the Sun), to Parjanya (the Rain-god), to the Maruts (the Storm-gods) and above all to Uṣas (the Dawn). In the hymns addressed to the latter the singers vie with each other in magnificent metaphors which are intended to depict the splendour of the rising dawn. Gleaming she approaches like a maiden decked by her mother, who is proud of her body. She puts on splendid garments, like a dancer, and reveals her bosom to the mortal. Clothed in light the maiden appears in the East and





As the birds fly forth from their resting-places, so men with  
 store of food rise at thy dawning.  
 Yea, to the liberal mortal who remaineth at home, O Goddess  
 Dawn, much good thou bringest."

To *Vāta*, the Wind, as the leader of the Maruts, the storm-gods, the following hymn (*Rv.* X, 168) is addressed, which I quote in the translation of Macdonell <sup>1</sup> :

"Of *Vāta*'s car I now will praise the greatness:  
 Rending it speeds along; its noise is thunder.  
 Touching the sky it flies, creating lightnings;  
 Scattering dust it traverses earth's ridges.

The hosts of *Vāta* onward speed together:  
 They haste to him as women to a concourse.  
 The god with them upon the same car mounted,  
 The king of all this universe speeds onward.

In air, along his pathways speeding onward,  
 Never on any day he tarries resting.  
 The first-born, order-loving friend of waters:  
 Where was he born, and whence has he arisen?

Of gods the breath, and of the world the offspring,  
 This god according to his liking wanders,  
 His sound is heard, his form is never looked on:  
 That *Vāta* let us worship with oblation."

Beside these songs, which are worthy of being valued as works of poetic art, there is indeed a second class of hymns in the *Rgveda*, which are composed only as sacrificial songs and litanies, for quite definite ritual purposes. A strict line of demarcation is here, however, not possible. Whether we wish to accept a song as the spontaneous expression of pious faith, as the work of a divinely inspired poet, or as sacrificial prayer put together in a workmanlike fashion, is often only a matter of taste. The extraordinary monotony of these prayers and sacrificial chants is certainly one of their characteristics. It is always with the same turns of expression

<sup>1</sup> *Hymns from the Rgveda*, p. 62.

that one god, like another, is praised as great and mighty : always the same formulas, with which the sacrificial priest beseeches the gods for wealth of cattle and riches. Many of these sacrificial songs are already distinguishable through the fact that in one and the same hymn several gods, sometimes even all the gods of the Vedic pantheon, are invoked one after another. For, at the great Soma-sacrifice every god must receive his share, and every sacrificial offering must be accompanied by a verse. Compare, for instance, with the above-quoted songs to Varuṇa, Indra and Agni, a sacrificial litany like the following (*Rv.* VII, 35) :

“ May Indra and Agni grant us happiness by their mercy, so also Indra and Varuṇa, to whom sacrifice is offered; may Indra and Soma grant us happiness, welfare and blessing! May Indra and Pūsan grant us happiness at the capture of booty.

May Bhaga grant us happiness; our hymns of praise, Purandhi, our wealth, may they bring us happiness.....

May Dhātār, Dhartar and the far-extending (Earth) freely grant us happiness; may the two great realms of space,<sup>1</sup> may the mountain, may the auspicious invocations to the gods grant us happiness.

May Agni of shining countenance, may Mitra and Varuṇa, may the two Aśvins grant us happiness; may the good works of the pious grant us happiness! May the mighty Wind-god blow to us happiness!”

Thus it goes on through fifteen long verses.

To these sacrificial songs belong among others also the so-called *Āprīsūktas*, ‘ propitiatory hymns ’ (*i.e.*, hymns for the propitiation or reconciliation of certain deities, demons, and certain personified objects connected with the sacrifice). These hymns, of which there are ten in the *Rgveda-Samhitā*, have a quite definite use at the animal sacrifice. They all consist of eleven or twelve verses, and Agni is invoked in them under various names, that he may bring the gods to the sacrifice. In the fourth or fifth verse the priests are invited to strew about the sacred grass, on which the gods are to sit down in order to receive the sacrificial gifts. Also certain goddesses are regularly invoked in the hymns, and the penultimate verse generally contains an

<sup>1</sup> Heaven and Earth.

invocation to the stake which serves in the binding of the sacrificial animal, *e.g.* "O divine tree, let the sacrificial meal go to the gods".

The hymns of Book IX which have already been referred to above, are throughout sacrificial songs, which are all addressed to Soma and are used in the great Soma-sacrifice. In sheer endless monotony the same procedure recurs, the pressing of the soma, the mixing and refining of the same, the pouring into the vats, and so on; again and again Indra is called to the drinking of the soma, Soma and Indra united are praised, and implored for riches, or for rain, of which the soma-juice trickling down through the sieve is a symbol. But rarely in these monotonous litanies do we come across a pretty metaphor, as for instance, when it is said of Soma (*Rr.* IX, 16, 6) :

" Clarified by the sieve of sheep's wool  
Soma rises to his fullest splendour,  
There he stands, as after battle  
Stands the hero by the stolen cows."

The fact that verses may be composed for ritual purposes and yet be of great poetic beauty, is proved by the funeral songs of which a few are preserved in Book X of the *Rgveda*. In Ancient India corpses were usually burnt, yet in the oldest times burial was probably the custom with the Indians, as with other Indo-European peoples. The following beautiful verses (*Rv.* X, 18, 10-13) refer to a burial :<sup>1</sup>

" Approach the bosom of the earth, the mother,  
This earth, the far-extending, most propitious;  
Young, soft as wool to bounteous givers, may she  
Preserve thee from the lap of dissolution.

Wide open, earth, O press not heavily on him;  
Be easy of approach to him, a refuge safe,  
As with a robe a mother hides  
Her son, so shroud this man, O earth.

<sup>1</sup> Translated by A. A. Macdonell, *Hymns from the Rgveda*, p. 88.



Thy portion is the goat: with heat consume him; let thy fierce flame,  
thy glowing splendour, burn him.  
With thine auspicious forms, O Jâtavedas, bear this man to the  
region of the pious."

Quite early there arose, among the Indians, doubts as to the power, even as to the existence of the gods. Already in the hymn *Rv.* II, 12, translated above, which praises so confidently the might and the feats of strength of Indra, and the separate verses of which end in the refrain, which is flung out in such full faith: "He, O men, is Indra,"—even there we hear that there were people who did not believe in Indra: "Of whom they ask 'Where is he?' Of him indeed, they also say, 'He is not'.....Believe in him: for he, O men, is Indra." Similar doubts occur in the remarkable hymn *Rv.* VIII, 100, 3 f., where the priests are invited to offer a song of praise to Indra, "a true one, if in truth, he is: for many say: 'There is no Indra, who has ever seen him? To whom are we to direct the song of

praise?' " Whereupon Indra personally appears, in order to give assurance of his existence and his greatness: " There I am, singer, look at me here, in greatness I tower above all beings " and so on.

But when people had once begun to doubt Indra himself, who was the highest and mightiest of all the gods, so much the more arose scruples concerning the plurality of the gods in general, and doubts began to arise whether indeed there was any merit in sacrificing to the gods. Thus in the hymn *Rv.* X, 121, in which Prajāpati is praised as the creator and preserver of the world and as the one god, and in which, in the refrain recurring in verse after verse: " Which god shall we honour by means of sacrifice?" there lies hidden the thought, that in reality there is nothing in all the plurality of the gods, and that alone the one and only god, the Creator Prajāpati, deserves honour. Finally, this scepticism finds its most powerful expression in the profound poem of the Creation (*Rv.* X, 129). It begins with a description of the time before the creation:

" Nor aught existed then, nor naught existed,  
There was no air, nor heaven beyond.  
What covered all? Wherein? In whose shelter was it?  
Was it the water, deep and fathomless?

No death was then, nor was there life immortal.  
Of day and night there was then no distinction.  
That *One* alone breathed windless by itself.  
Than that, forsooth, no other thing existed."

Only very timidly does the poet venture on a reply to the question regarding the origin of the world. He imagines the state before the creation as 'darkness shrouded in darkness', far and wide nothing but an impenetrable flood, until through the power of the *Tapas*,<sup>1</sup> 'the One' arose. This 'One' was already an intellectual being; and as the first product of his mind—'the mind's first fruit,' as the poet says—came forth

<sup>1</sup> *Tapas* may here have its original meaning of 'heat' (some) 'creative heat' analogous to the heat by which the brood-hen produces life from the egg) or it may mean the 'fervour' of austerities; or, as Deussen thinks, both meanings may be implied in the word.

Kāma, i.e., 'sexual desire, love,' and in this Kāma "the wise searching in their hearts, have by meditation discovered the connection between the existing and the non-existing". But only gentle hints does the poet venture to give, soon doubts again begin to arise, and he concludes with the anxious questions :

" Who knoweth it forsooth, who can declare it here,  
Whence this creation has arisen, whence it came?  
The gods came hither by this world's creation only :<sup>1</sup>  
Who knoweth then, whence this creation has arisen?

Whence this creation has arisen, whether  
It has been made or not: He who surveys  
This world in highest heaven, he maybe knoweth,—  
Or, it may be, knoweth not."<sup>2</sup>

In most of the philosophical hymns of the *Rgveda* the idea certainly comes to the foreground of a creator who is named now Prajāpati, now Brahmanaspati, or Brhaspati, or again Viśvakarman, but who is still always thought of as a personal god. But already in the above-quoted verse it appears doubtful to the poet whether the creation was 'made' or whether it came into being by some other means, and the creative principle receives no name in this poem, but is called 'the One'. This already in the hymns the great idea of Universal Unity is foreshadowed, the idea that everything which we see in Nature and which the popular belief designates as 'gods,' in reality is only the emanation of the One and Only One, that all plurality is only

<sup>1</sup> Not the 'will' of Schopenhauer, as Deussen and others assume. As sexual desire leads to the procreation and birth of beings, so these ancient thinkers considered sexual desire as the primal source of all existence.

<sup>2</sup> That is, the gods themselves were created only with the rest of creation, therefore, they cannot tell us whence the world originated.

<sup>3</sup> Translated into English by the author. This famous hymn has been often translated and discussed, thus by H. T. Colebrooke, *Miscellaneous Essays* (2nd Ed., Madras, 1872), I, pp. 38 f.; Max Müller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, 2nd Ed., London, 1860, p. 564; J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V, p. 356, *Metrical Translations from Sanskrit Writers*, pp. 188 f.; H. W. Wallis, *Cosmology of the Rgveda*, London, 1887, pp. 89 ff.; W. D. Whitney, *JAOS*, XI, p. cix; P. Deussen, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie I* (where all the philosophical hymns of the *Rgveda* are discussed); L. Scherman, *Philosophische Hymnen aus der Rig- und Atharvaveda-Samhitā*, Strassburg, 1887, pp. 1 ff. It has also been translated by Macdonell, E. J. Thomas, etc.



*imaginary—an idea which is really already expressed clearly and distinctly in the verse Rv. I, 164, 46 :*

“ They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa,  
And Agni; he is the heavenly bird Garutmat:  
To what is one, the poets give many a name,  
They call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvān.”

While these philosophical hymns form, as it were, a bridge to the philosophical speculations of the Upaniṣads, there exist also a number of poems in the *R̥gveda-Saṃhitā*—there might be about twenty of them—which form a connecting link with the epic and dramatic poetry. These are fragments of narratives in the form of dialogues (*Saṃvādas*), and may, therefore, be fitly called *Saṃvāda* or dialogue hymns. H. Oldenberg<sup>1</sup> called them ‘*Ākhyāna* hymns’, and started a theory, in order to explain their fragmentary and enigmatic character. The oldest form of epic poetry in India, he said, was a mixture of prose and verse, the speeches of the persons only being in verses, while the events connected with the speeches were narrated in prose. Originally only the verses used to be committed to memory and handed down, while the prose story was left to be narrated by every reciter in his own words. Now in the dialogue hymns of the *R̥gveda* only the verse portions, containing conversations, have been preserved, while the prose portions of the narrative are lost to us. Only some of these narratives can partly be restored with the help of the *Brāhmaṇas* or the epic literature, or even of commentaries. Where these aids fail, nothing remains for us but to try to guess the story from the conversations. This theory seemed to be supported by the fact that not only in Indian, but also in other literatures, the mixture of prose and verse is an early form of epic poetry. It is found, for instance, in Old Irish and in Scandinavian poetry.<sup>2</sup> In India we find it in some narrative portions of the *Brāhmaṇas*

<sup>1</sup> *Das altindische Akhyāna in ZDMG.*, 37 (1883) 54 ff. and *Akhyānahymnen im R̥gveda* in ZDMG., 39 (1885) 52 ff. *Ākhyāna* means ‘narrative’.

<sup>2</sup> Already in the year 1878 in a lecture delivered at the 33rd meeting of German philologists and pedagogues at Gera, Ernst Windisch had pointed out the significance of quite similar phenomena in the old Irish legend-poetry, and on this occasion had also already drawn attention to the related phenomena in Indian literature.

and Upaniṣads, in some of the old parts of the *Mahābhārata*, in Buddhist literature, in the literature of fables and tales, in the drama, and again in the campū. It is true that, in all these cases the prose has been handed down together with the verses, but as the *Rgveda* is professedly the Veda of the *verses*, it was not possible to include any prose in the *Samhitā* of the *Rgveda*. And if an Ākhyāna, consisting of prose and verse, was to find a place in the *Rgveda-Samhitā*, the prose portion would have to be omitted. This is the theory of Oldenberg, which for a long time was almost generally accepted by scholars.

Of late, however, the theory has also met with a great deal of opposition. Many years back Max Müller and Sylvain Lévi<sup>1</sup> had already suggested that the dialogue poems of the *Rgveda* might be a kind of dramas. This idea has been taken up by Joh. Hertel<sup>2</sup> and L. von Schroeder,<sup>3</sup> who tried to prove that these *Samvāda* hymns are really speeches belonging to some dramatic performances connected with the religious cult. We have only, they say, to supply dramatic action, and the difficulties which these hymns offer to interpretation will disappear. What kind of action has to be supplied can, of course, only be guessed from the dialogues themselves.

The fact is, that poems, like the dialogue hymns of the *Rgveda*, are of frequent occurrence in Indian literature. We shall find similar semi-epic and semi-dramatic poems, consisting chiefly or entirely of dialogues or conversations, in the *Mahābhārata*, in the Purāṇas, and especially in Buddhist literature. All these poems are nothing else but ancient ballads of the same kind as are found also in the literatures of many other peoples.<sup>4</sup> This ancient ballad poetry is the source both of

<sup>1</sup> *Le Théâtre Indien*, Paris, 1890, pp. 301 ff.

<sup>2</sup> WZKM., 18, 1904, 59 ff., 137 ff.; 23, 1909, 273 ff.; *Indische Märchen*, Jena, 1921, pp. 344, 367 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Mysterium und Mimns im Rigveda*, Leipzig, 1908.

<sup>4</sup> A. Barth (RHR., 19, 1899, 130 f. .... Oeuvres, 11, 5 f.) has already compared the Ākhyāna of Purūravas and Urvāṣī in the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa* with the ballad of King Rasā'ū in Temple's *Legends of the Panjāb*. On the whole question s., Pischel, GGA., 1891, 355 ff.; Oldenberg, GGA., 1909, 66 ff.; NGGW., 1911, 459 ff.; Bloomfield, *American Journal of Philology*, 30, 1909, 78 ff.; A. B. Keith, JRAS., 1909, 200 ff.; 1911, 979 ff.; 1912, 429 ff.; ZDMG., 64, 1910, 584 ff.; J. Charpentier, WZKM., 23, 1909, 151 f.; 25, 1911, 307 ff.; *Die Suparṇasage*, Uppsala, 1920, p. 13 ff. W. Caland, AR., 14, 1911, 499 ff.;

the epic and of the drama, for these ballads consist of a narrative and of a dramatic element. The epic developed from the narrative, the drama arose from the dramatic elements of the ancient ballad. These ancient Ākhyānas or ballads were not always composed entirely in verse, but sometimes an introductory or a concluding story was told in prose, and occasionally the verses were linked together by short explanations in prose. Thus, it may be that in some cases there might have been a connecting prose story (as Oldenberg assumed), which, if we knew it, would make the conversations of the hymns clear. But most of these hymns are simply ballads of the half-epic, half-dramatic type, though not real dramas, as some scholars have thought them to be.

The most famous of these Vedic ballads or *Samvāda* hymns is *Rv.* X. 95. This is a poem of 18 stanzas, consisting of a dialogue between Purūravas and Urvaśī. Purūravas is a mortal, Urvaśī a nymph (Apsaras). During four years the divine beauty lived on earth as the wife of Purūravas, until by him she became pregnant, when she vanished, 'like the first of the dawns'. He went out to seek her. At last he found her, playing with other water-nymphs, in a lake. That is about all we can glean from the obscure, often quite unintelligible verses, from the dialogues between the deserted one and the goddess who is romping about in the pond with her playmates. Fortunately, this ancient myth of the love of a mortal king for a divine maiden is also preserved in other portions of Indian literature, and thus we can, to a certain extent, complete the poem of the *Rgveda*. The legend of Purūravas and Urvaśī is already told us in a Brāhmaṇa,<sup>1</sup> and the verses of the *Rgveda* are woven into the narrative. We are there told that the nymph, when she consented to become the wife of Purūravas, stipulated three conditions, one of which was that she might never see him naked. The Gandharvas—demi-gods of the same kingdom to

Hillebrandt, *Lieder des Rgveda*, passim; K. F. Geldner, *Die indische Balladendichtung*, Festschrift der Universität, Marburg, 1913, pp. 93 ff.; E. Windisch, *Geschichte der Sanskrit Philologie*, pp. 404 ff.; M. Winternitz, *WZKM.*, 23, 1909, 102 ff.; *Oesterreichische Monatsschrift für den Orient*, 41, 1915, 173 ff., and the *Lecture on Ancient Indian Ballad Poetry* in the *Cuttack Review*, December, 1923.

<sup>1</sup> *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, XI, 5, 1,

which the Apsaras belong—wanted to get Urvaśī back. Therefore, in the night, they stole two little lambs which she loved like children, and which were tied to her bed. As Urvaśī complained bitterly that she was robbed as though no man were near, Purūravas jumped up—“naked as he was, for it seemed to him that the putting on of a garment would take too long”—to pursue the thieves. But at the same instant the Gandharvas caused a flash of lightning to appear, so that it became as light as day, and Urvaśī perceived the king naked. She then vanished; and when Purūravas returned, she was gone. Mad with grief, the king wandered about the country, until one day he came to a pond, in which nymphs in the form of swans, were swimming about. This gives rise to the dialogue which we find in the *Ṛgveda* and which is reproduced with explanatory additions in the *Brāhmaṇa*.<sup>1</sup> Yet all the pleadings of Purūravas that she might return to him are in vain. Even when, in despair, he talked of self-destruction—he wanted to throw himself from the rocks as a prey to the fierce wolves—she only replied :

“Nay, do not die, Purūravas, nor perish :  
 let not the evil-omened wolves devour thee.  
 With women there can be no lasting friendship,  
 hearts of hyenas are the hearts of women.”<sup>2</sup>

Whether and how Purūravas is reunited with his beloved is not quite clear either in the *Ṛgveda* or in the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*. It seems that he becomes transformed into a Gandharva and attains heaven, where at last the joy of reunion is his. The story of Purūravas and Urvaśī has often been retold in India : it is briefly hinted at in the *Kāṭhaka* belonging to the *Black Yajurveda*, it is retold in exegetic works attached to the *Veda*,<sup>3</sup> in the *Harivaṃśa*, an appendix to the *Mahābhārata*, in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and in the book of tales *Kathāsaritsāgara*, and no less a poet than Kālidāsa has founded one of his immortal dramas on it. From the circumstance that, in spite of all efforts

<sup>1</sup> The *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa* has only fifteen of the eighteen verses of the *Ṛgveda*.

<sup>2</sup> Translated by R. T. H. Griffith.

<sup>3</sup> *Baudhāyana Śrautaśūtra* (cf. Caland, in the *Album Kern*, pp. 57 ff.) *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Saṅguruṣiṅga's* commentary on the *Sarvānukramaṇi* of the *Ṛgveda*.

to bring the verses of the *R̥gveda* into unison with the later narratives and to utilize the latter in the elucidation of the *R̥gvedic* poem,<sup>1</sup> there is still so much that is obscure and unexplained in these verses, we see how very much earlier the *R̥gveda* is than any other known work of Indian literature.

We have another valuable fragment of the art of narration in ancient times, in the dialogue of Yama and Yamī (*R̥v.* X. 10). An old myth of the origin of the human race from a first pair of twins underlies the conversation.<sup>2</sup> Yamī tries to tempt her brother Yama to incest, in order that the human race may not die out. In passionate words, glowing with desire, the sister draws the brother on to love. In gentle, deliberate speech, pointing to the eternal laws of the gods, which forbid the union of blood-relations, Yama repulses her. These speeches, in which unfortunately there is still much obscurity, are full of dramatic strength. Yamī first says :

“ My friend I would draw near to me in friendship,  
Should he have gone e'en to the farthest ocean,  
That he beget a grandson to his sire  
On earth, remembering wisely future days.” [1]

Thereupon Yama replies :

“ Thy friend loves not the friendship which considers her who is near  
in kindred as a stranger.  
Sons of the mighty Asura, the Heroes, supporters of the heavens,  
see far around them.” [2]

Yamī, however, tries to persuade her brother that the gods themselves desire that he shall unite himself with her in order to

<sup>1</sup> See especially Geldner in the *Vedische Studien*, I, 243-295. Also Oldenberg, *ZDMG.*, 39, 72 ff. and *Die Literatur des alten Indien*, pp. 53 ff. The Purūravas-Urvastī dialogue has also been translated by Hertel, *Indogerm. Forschungen* 81, 1912, 143 ff., and Hillebrandt, *Lieder des R̥gveda*, pp. 142 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See A. Weber, *SBA.*, 1895, 822 ff. Yama means 'twin,' and Yamī is a feminine form of Yama. A. Winter has attempted a mythological interpretation of the myth in the essay: *Mein Bruder freil um mich* (ZVV., VII, 1897, pp. 172 ff.), where he compares *R̥v.* X, 10. with a Lettic popular song, in which a brother attempts to seduce his sister to incest. Schlegeler (*Mysterium und Mimus*, pp. 275 ff.), explains the hymn as a drama connected with some rite of fertility. This is certainly wrong. See Winternitz, *WZKM.*, 20, 1909, 118 f. and Charpentier, *Die Suparṇasaga*, p. 90.

propagate his race. As he will not listen, she becomes more and more persistent, more and more passionate :

“ I, Yamī, am possessed by love of Yama, that I may rest on the same couch beside him.

I as a wife would yield me to my husband. Like car-wheels let us speed to meet each other.” [7]

But Yama again refuses with the words :

“ They stand not still, they never close their eyelids, those sentinels of God who wander round us.

Not me—go quickly, wanton, with another, and hasten like a chariot-wheel to meet him.” [8]

More and more tempestuous, however, does the sister grow, ever more ardently does she desire the embrace of Yama, until—on his repeated refusal—she bursts forth into the words :

“ Alas! thou art indeed a weakling, Yama; we find in thee no trace of heart or spirit.

As round the tree the woodbine clings, another will cling about thee girt as with a girdle.” [13]

Whereupon Yama concludes the dialogue with the words :

“ Embrace another, Yamī; let another, even as the woodbine rings the tree, enfold thee.

Win thou his heart and let him win thy fancy, and he shall form with thee a blest alliance.”<sup>1</sup> [14]

How the story of Yama and Yamī ended, we do not know; moreover, no later source gives us any information upon it. Thus the poem of the *R̥gveda* is unfortunately only a torso, but a torso which indicates a splendid work of art.

The *Sūryāsūkta*, *R̥v.* X. 85,<sup>2</sup> may also be included in the *R̥gvedic* ballad poetry. This particular hymn describes the

<sup>1</sup> Verses 2, 7, 8, 13, 14 translated by R. T. H. Griffith, the first verse by the author.

<sup>2</sup> Translated into German by A. Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, 5, 177 ff. See also J. Khni, *ZDMG.*, 23, 1879, 166 ff.; Pischel, *Vedische Studien*, I, 14 ff.; Oldenberg, *GGA.*, 1889, p. 7.

marriage of Sūryā (the sun-daughter, as the dawn is here called) with Soma (the moon), at which the two Aśvins were the match-makers. This hymn consists of 47 verses, which are somewhat loosely connected. The verses nearly all refer to the marriage ritual, and most of them, as we know from the *Gṛhyasūtras*, the manuals of domestic ritual, were used also at the marriage of ordinary mortals. Yet I do not think that these verses were merely compiled from the ritual (as is the case with some of the funeral hymns) so that they would have to be regarded as a kind of compilation of all the benedictions used in the marriage-rites, like a chapter in a prayer-book. It is much more probable that it is an ancient ballad describing the marriage of Sūryā partly in narrative stanzas, partly in addresses to the Aśvins and Sūryā, and partly by the insertion of the mantras (benedictions, incantations) recited at the various stages of the marriage ceremony. But among the benedictions which we find in this Sūryāsūkta, there are many which, with their simple, warm, hearty tone, remind us of the funeral hymns discussed above. Thus the bridal pair is addressed in the beautiful words :

“ Happy be thou and prosper with thy children here: be vigilant to  
rule thy household in this home.  
Closely unite thy body with this man, thy lord. So shall ye, full  
of years, address your company.” [27]

The spectators, past whom the marriage procession goes, are thus accosted :

“ Signs of good fortune mark the bride: Come all of you and  
look at her.  
Wish her prosperity, and then return unto your homes again.” [33]

When the bridegroom, according to ancient Indo-European marriage-custom, clasps the hand of the bride, he recites this verse :

“ I take thy hand in mine for happy fortune that thou mayst  
reach old age with me thy husband.  
Gods, Aryāman, Bhaga, Savitar, Purandhi, have given thee to be  
my household's mistress.” [36]

When at last the bridal pair enter the new home, they are received with the following words :

“ Be ye not parted; dwell ye here; reach the full time of human life.

With sons and grandsons sport and play, rejoicing in your own abode.” [42]

And upon the bride the blessing is invoked :

“ O Beunteous Indra, make this bride blest in her sons and fortunate. Vouchsafe to her ten sons, and make her husband the eleventh man !” [45]<sup>1</sup>

But some of the marriage benedictions have more of the character of magic formulas. Among them we find charms against the evil eye and other pernicious magic, by means of which the bride could injure her future husband, as well as exorcisms by means of which demons, which lie in wait for the bride, are to be scared away. These magic formulas by no means stand alone, for there are, besides, about thirty magic songs in the *R̥gveda*. Some of these are benedictions and formulas for the healing of various diseases, for the protection of the embryo, for warding off the effects of bad dreams and unfavourable omens, while others are incantations for the scaring away of witches, for the destruction of enemies and malevolent wizards, or magic formulas against poison and vermin, verses for the supplanting of a rival; we also find a blessing on the field, a charm for the prosperity of cattle, a battle charm, a charm for inducing sleep, and so on. Of this kind is also the very remarkable ‘ Frog song ’, *R̥v.* VII, 103. Here the frogs are compared with Brahmins. In the dry season they lie there like Brahmins who have taken the vow of silence. Then when the rain comes, they greet each other with merry croaking ‘ as a son his father ’. And the one repeats the croaking of the other, as the pupils repeat the words of the teacher when studying the Veda in a Brahmin school. They modulate their voices in many ways. As priests at the Soma-sacrifice sit singing around the

<sup>1</sup> The five verses translated by R. T. H. Griffith.



filled tub, so the frogs celebrate the commencement of the rainy season with their song. At the end follows a prayer for wealth :

“ Both Lowing Cow and Bleating Goat have given,  
Spotty and Tawny, too, have given us riches.  
The frogs give kine by hundreds; they for pressings  
Of Soma thousandfold, prolong existence.” <sup>1</sup>

All this sounds immensely funny, and almost generally the song was looked upon by scholars as a parody on the sacrificial songs and malicious satire against the Brahmans.<sup>2</sup> However, Bloomfield has proved conclusively <sup>3</sup> that this is a magic incantation, which was used as a rain-spell, and that the frogs, which, according to ancient Indian popular belief, can bring forth water, are praised and invoked as rain-bringers. The comparison with the Brahmans is not intended as a satire on the latter, but only as a flattery—a *captatio benevolentiae*—to the frogs. The frog-song was probably never a satire. It is only we who see something comic in it, and not the ancient Indians, who actually regarded frogs as great wizards. It appears, however, that incantations sometimes arose from secular poems. Thus, the song, *Rv.* VI. 75, may originally have been a war-song, which has been changed into a battle charm. While some verses of this song are distinguished by great poetic beauty and especially by bold images, other verses show only the dry, inartistic language of incantations. The first three verses sound more like a war-song than like an incantation :

“ The warrior’s look is like a thunderous rain-cloud’s when, armed with mail, he seeks the lap of battle.

<sup>1</sup> Translated by A. A. Macdonell, *Hymns from the R̥gveda*, p. 96. A free poetical translation of the hymn is to be found in J. Muir, *Metrical Translations from Sanskrit Writers*, pp. 194 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. for instance, Deussen, *AGPh.*, 1, 1, pp. 100 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *JAOS.*, 17, 1896, pp. 178 ff. Already before this M. Haug (*Brahma und die Brahmanen*, München, 1871, p. 12) had explained the song in the same way, and attached to it the following interesting information: “ The song is used in connection with the foregoing, addressed to the rain-god (Parjanya), even to-day in time of great drought, when the ardently desired rain refuses to come. Twenty to thirty Brahmans go to a river and recite these two hymns, in order to cause the rain to descend.”

See also L. v. Schroeder, *Mysterium und Mimus im R̥gveda*, pp. 396 ff., and J. W. Hauner, *Die Anfänge der Yogapraxis*, Berlin, 1922, pp. 68 ff.

Be thou victorious with unwounded body : so let the thickness of thy mail protect thee.

With bow let us win kine, with bow the battle, with bow the victors in our hot encounters.

The bow brings grief and sorrow to the foeman : armed with the bow may we subdue all regions.

Close to his ear, as fain to speak, she presses, holding her well-loved friend in her embraces.

Strained on the bow, she whispers like a woman—this bow-string that preserves us in the combat.”<sup>1</sup>

On the whole, however, the magic songs of the *Rgveda* differ in no wise from those of the *Atharvaveda*, with which we shall deal later. But it is very significant that, besides the hymns to the great gods and the sacrificial songs, also incantations like these have been included in the *Rgveda-Samhitā*—and that by no means only in the tenth book of the latter.

It is still more significant that also some apparently quite secular poems have got mixed amongst the sacred songs and sacrificial chants of the *Rgveda*. Thus, we find, for example, *Rv.* IX. 112. in the midst of the Soma songs a satirical poem, which derides the manifold desires of mankind. It is probably an old popular song of the ‘labour song’ type. It could be sung as an accompaniment to any kind of work, and here the refrain “Flow, Indu,<sup>2</sup> flow, for Indra’s sake”<sup>3</sup> indicates that it was adapted for the work of pressing Soma.<sup>4</sup> I give the remarkable poem in the translation of R. T. H. Griffith :

“ We all have various thoughts and plans, and diverse are the ways of men.

<sup>1</sup> Translated by R. T. H. Griffith.

<sup>2</sup> Indu=Soma.

<sup>3</sup> There is no justification for omitting this refrain, as some translators have done, for instance, Muir, *Metrical Translations from Sanskrit Writers*, p. 190; Macdonell, *Hymns from the Rgveda*, p. 90. But see Pischel, *Vedische Studien*, I, 107.

<sup>4</sup> Some of the Soma hymns (e.g., *Rv.* I, 28; IX, 2; 6; 8 etc.) are ‘labour songs’ in which the whole process of preparing the Soma juice is described. See K. Bücher, *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, 5. Aufl., Leipzig 1919, pp. 412 f. L. v. Schroeder (*Mysterium und Mimic in Rigveda*, pp. 408 ff.) has with bold imagination tried to show that the hymn was used at a popular procession during a Soma festival. But there are no facts on which this hypothesis could be founded. Oldenberg (GGA., 1909, 80 f.) thinks that the hymn was intended as a prayer at some Soma-sacrifice offered for attaining special wishes. So also Charpentier, *Die Suparnasage*, pp. 80 f.

The Brahman seeks the worshipper, wright seeks the cracked, and leech the maimed. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

The smith with ripe and seasoned plants, with feathers of the birds of air,

With stones, and with enkindled flames, seeks him who hath a store of gold. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

A bard am I, my dad's a leech, mammy lays corn upon the stones. Striving for wealth, with varied plans, we follow our desires like kine. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

The horse would draw an easy car, gay hosts attract the laugh and jest.

The male desires his mate's approach,<sup>1</sup> the frog is eager for the flood. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake."

The most beautiful amongst the non-religious poems of the *Rgveda* collection is the song of the gambler, *Rv.* X, 34. It is the soliloquy of a penitent sinner, who by means of his irresistible attraction to dice-playing has destroyed the happiness of his life. In pathetic verses the gambler describes how the dice have caused him to lose his domestic happiness :

" She wrangles not with me, nor is she angry:  
To me and comrades she was ever kindly.  
For dice that only luckless throws effected  
'T've driven away from home a wife devoted. [2]  
Her mother hates me, she herself rejects me:  
For one in such distress there is no pity.  
I find a gambling man is no more useful  
Than is an aged horse that's in the market. [3]  
Others embrace the wife of him whose chattels  
The eager dice have striven hard to capture;  
And father, mother, brothers say about him:  
We know him not; lead him away a captive." [4]

The uncanny power of the dice, too, is described in forceful terms :

" When to myself I think, I'll not go with them,  
I'll stay behind my friends that go to gamble,  
And those brown nuts, thrown down, have raised their voices,  
I go, like wench, straight to the place of meeting." [5]

Expressed much more coarsely in the original.

And of the dice it is said :

“ The dice attract the gambler, but deceive and wound,  
Both paining men at play and causing them to pain.  
Like boys they offer first and then take back their gifts:  
With honey sweet to gamblers by their magic charm. [7]

Downward they roll, then swiftly springing upward,  
They overcome the man with hands, though handless.  
Cast on the board like magic bits of charcoal,  
Though cold themselves, they burn the heart to ashes.” [9]

And however much he bewails his fate, yet he always falls  
again into the power of the dice.

“ Grieved is the gambler's wife by him abandoned,  
Grieved, too, his mother as he aimless wanders.  
Indebted, fearing, he desiring money  
At night approaches other people's houses. [10]

It pains the gambler when he sees a woman  
Another's wife, and their well-ordered household.  
He yokes those brown steeds early in the morning,<sup>1</sup>  
And when the fire is low sinks down a beggar.”<sup>2</sup> [11]

But finally he resolves to turn over a new leaf. He  
implores the dice to set him free, as, according to the command  
of Savitar, he desires to give up gambling, in order to look after  
his field and live for his family.

Lastly, a kind of intermediate position between religious  
and secular poetry is occupied by those hymns which are  
connected with so-called Dānastutis, ‘ Songs of praise to  
Generosity ’ (namely, that of the princes and patrons of the  
sacrifice, for whom the songs were composed). There are about

<sup>1</sup> i.e., he begins to play with the brown dice.

<sup>2</sup> Translated by A. A. Macdonell, *Hymns from the Rigveda*, pp. 88 ff. The hymn has also been translated by J. Muir, *Metrical Translations from Sanskrit Writers*, pp. 190 ff. L. v. Schroeder (*Mysterium und Mimus im Rigveda*, pp. 377 ff.) explains the poem as a drama in form of a monologue. Charpentier (*Die Suparnasage*, pp. 83 ff.) thinks that it was composed for ‘ didactic purposes ’. It seems to me more probable that this soliloquy of a gambler is part of a ballad, in which some epic story was told like that of Yudhiṣṭhira or Nala.

forty such hymns.<sup>1</sup> Some of them are songs of victory, in which the god Indra is praised, because he has helped some king to achieve a victory over his enemies. With the praise of the god is united the glorification of the victorious king. Finally, however, the singer praises his patron, who has presented him with oxen, horses, and beautiful slaves out of the booty of war, while incidentally with a few coarse, obscene jokes, the pleasure which the slaves give to the singer is recalled. Others are very long sacrificial songs,<sup>2</sup> also mostly addressed to Indra, which evidently were composed for quite definite occasions at the request of a prince or a wealthy man, and were recited at the sacrifice; and they also are followed by verses in which the patron of the sacrifice is praised, because he gave the singer a liberal priestly fee. These Dānastutis always mention the full name of the pious donor, and indubitably refer to historic events, or actual happenings. Hence, they are not unimportant. As poems they are, of course, quite worthless; they are composed to order by artisan-like verse-writers, or accomplished with an eye to the expected payment. Even when they are not connected with any Dānastuti, some of the hymns of the *Rgveda* certainly were 'hammered together' for good payment in an equally artisan-like manner. Sometimes even the Vedic singers themselves compare their work with that of the carpenter.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it is remarkable that among those hymns which excel at all as works of poetic art, there is not a single one which ends in a Dānastuti. When, therefore, H. Oldenberg<sup>4</sup> says about *Rgvedic poetry in general*: "This poetry does not rank in the service of beauty, as this religion does not serve the aim of enlightening and uplifting the soul; but both rank in the service of class-interest, of personal interest, of fees,"—he evidently forgets that among the 1,028 hymns of the *Rgveda*

<sup>1</sup> Only one hymn (*Rv.* I, 126) is entirely a Dānastuti. Otherwise it is usually only three to five verses at the conclusion of the hymns which contain the Dānastuti.

<sup>2</sup> We get the impression that the honorarium was the greater, according to the length of the poem.

<sup>3</sup> *Rv.* I, 130, 6: "This speech has been built for thee by men desiring possessions, like a chariot by a clever master." *Rv.* I, 61, 4: "To him (to Indra) I send this song of praise, as a coach builder sends a chariot to him who has ordered it."

<sup>4</sup> *Die Literatur des alten Indien*, p. 20.

there are only about 40 which end in *Dānastutis*. I think that among the composers of Vedic hymns there were certainly *artisans*, but equally certainly there were also *poets*.

There is one hymn in the *Rgveda* which is, in the higher sense, a *Dānastuti*, a 'Praise of Generosity'. It is the hymn, *Rv.* X, 117, which is worthy of mention also because it strikes a moralizing note which is otherwise quite foreign to the *Rgveda*. The *Rgveda* is everything but a text-book of morals. And the hymn, which I give here in the translation of A. A. Macdonell,<sup>1</sup> is quite isolated in the *Rgveda*:

"The gods inflict not hunger as a means to kill:  
Death frequently befalls even satiated men.<sup>2</sup>  
The charitable giver's wealth melts not away;  
The niggard never finds a man to pity him.

Who, of abundant food possessed, makes hard his heart  
Towards a needy and decrepit suppliant  
Whom once he courted, come to pray to him for bread:  
A man like this as well finds none to pity him.

He is the liberal man who helps the beggar  
That, craving food, emaciated wanders,  
And coming to his aid, when asked to succour,  
Immediately makes him a friend hereafter.

He is no friend who gives not of his substance  
To his devoted, intimate companion:  
This friend should turn from him—here is no haven—  
And seek a stranger elsewhere as a helper.

The wealthier man should give unto the needy,  
Considering the course of life hereafter;  
For riches are like chariot wheels revolving!  
Now to one man they come, now to another.

<sup>1</sup> *Hymns from the Rigveda*, pp. 92 f. Freely translated by J. Muir, *Metrical Translations from Sanskrit Writings*, pp. 193 f. See also Deussen, *AGPh.*, I, I, pp. 93 f.

<sup>2</sup> This is very well explained by A. Ludwig (*Der Rigveda* V, 561): "We do not interfere with the rule of the gods by giving nourishment to one who is nearly dying of starvation; this is said with bitter irony against the hypocrites who sought to justify their hardness of heart by saying that the fate of the needy ones was determined by the gods. The irony or sarcasm becomes unquestionable through what follows; the poet concludes further that, if the poor were predestined by the gods to death by starvation, then the wealthy who had plenty of food, must live for ever."

The foolish man from food has no advantage;  
 In truth I say: it is but his undoing;  
 No friend he ever fosters, no companion:  
 He eats alone, and he alone is guilty.

The plough that cleaves the soil produces nurture;  
 He that bestirs his feet completes his journey.  
 The speaking Brahmin earns more than the silent;  
 A friend who gives is better than the niggard.

The one-foot strides more swiftly than the biped;  
 The biped goes beyond him who has three feet.  
 The quadruped comes at the call of bipeds,  
 And watches near where groups of five are gathered.<sup>1</sup>

Two hands though equal make not what is equal;  
 No sister cows yield milk in equal measure;  
 Unequal is the strength even of twin children;  
 The gifts of even kinsmen are unequal."<sup>2</sup>

The last verse but one is an example of the riddle-poetry, very popular with ancient Indians as with other ancient nations. The hymn, *Rv.* I, 164, contains a large number of such riddles, most of which, unfortunately, we cannot understand. For instance :

" Seven harness a one-wheeled cart; it is drawn by one horse with seven names; three naves has the immortal, never-stopping wheel, on which all these beings stand."

This *may* mean : The seven priests of the sacrifice harness (by means of the sacrifice) the sun-chariot, which is drawn by seven horses or *one* horse with seven forms : this immortal sun-wheel has three naves, namely, the three seasons (summer, rainy season and winter), in which the life of all mankind is passed. However, other solutions of the riddle are possible.

<sup>1</sup> The translation is hardly questionable, so much the more, then, the sense. It has been conjectured that by the 'one-foot', the 'one-footed ram', a storm-god, is meant, or, by others, the sun, and that the 'three-footed' is the old man supported on a stick, and the 'quadruped' the dog. This is by no means certain.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Deussen, *AGPh*, I, 1, pp. 93 f.

The meaning of the following riddles, too, is by no means clear :

“ Bearing three mothers and three fathers the One stands erect, and they do not tire him; there on the back of the sky they consult with the all-knowing, but not all-embracing Vāc (Goddess of Speech).

He who made him knows nothing of him; he who has seen him, from him he is hidden; he lies enwrapped in the womb of the mother; he has many children, and yet he has gone to Nirṛti.<sup>1</sup>

The sky is my father and my progenitor, there is the navel; my own mother is this great earth. Between the two spread-out Soma vessels is the womb; into it the Father placed the seed in the daughter.”

On the other hand, it is clear that the sun is meant when it is said :

“ A shepherd I saw, who does not fall down, who wanders up and down on his paths: clothing himself in those<sup>2</sup> which run together and those which disperse<sup>2</sup> he circles about in the worlds.”

Equally clear is the meaning of the riddle :

“ Twelve tyres, one wheel, three naves: who knows that? In it there are altogether about three hundred and sixty movable pegs.”

The year is meant, with the twelve months, three seasons, and roughly three hundred and sixty days.<sup>3</sup>

Such riddle-questions and riddle-games were among the most popular diversions in ancient India; at some sacrifices they even formed a part of the ritual. We come across such riddles again in the *Atharvaveda* as well as in the *Yajurveda*.

If we now cast a glance over the varied contents of the *Rgveda-Saṃhitā*, of which I have here tried to give an idea, the conviction forces itself upon us that in this collection we have the fragments of the very oldest Indian poetry, that the songs, hymns and poems of the *Rgveda* which have come down to us are

<sup>1</sup> Nirṛti is the goddess of death and destruction. ‘To go to Nirṛti’ means, to be completely ruined, to sink into nothingness.

<sup>2</sup> The rays are meant.

<sup>3</sup> The riddles of *Bo. I*, 164, have been treated in detail by Martin Haug, *Vedische Rätselfragen und Rätselprüche* (S Bay A 1875) and by Deussen, *AGPh*, I, I, pp. 106-119. See also R. Roth, *ZDMG.*, 46, 1892, 769 f.; E. Windisch, *ZDMG.*, 48, 1894, 358 f.; H. Stumme, *ZDMG.*, 64, 1910, 485 f. and V. Henry, *Revue critique*, 1906, p. 403.



only a fragmentary portion of a much more extensive poetic literature, both religious and secular, of which probably the greater part is irretrievably lost. But as the great majority of these hymns are either sacrificial chants, or were used, or could have been used, as prayers and sacrificial songs, we may assume that these very hymns gave the actual stimulus for collecting and uniting them in one 'book'. Yet the collectors, who probably had a purely literary interest, as well as a religious interest in the collection, did not scruple to include in it also profane poems, which, by language and metre, had proved themselves to be equally ancient and venerable as those sacrificial chants. Only through being included in a 'book'—that is, a school-text intended for memorization—could they be saved from oblivion. Certainly there was much also which they considered too profane to be included in the *Rgveda-Samhitā*. Of this a certain amount has been saved through the fact that it was later included in another collection—the *Atharvaveda-Samhitā*.

#### THE ATHARVAVEDA-SAMHITA <sup>1</sup>

*Atharvaveda* means 'the Veda of the Atharvan' or 'the knowledge of Magic Formulas'. Originally, however, the word *Atharvan* meant a fire-priest, and it is probably the oldest Indian name for 'priest' in general, for the word dates back to the Indo-Iranian period. For the Atharvans or 'fire-people' of the Avesta correspond to the Indian Atharvans.<sup>2</sup> The fire-cult

<sup>1</sup> There are two complete English translations of the *Atharvaveda*, one by R. T. H. Griffith (Benares 1895-6), and another by W. D. Whitney, revised and brought nearer to completion and edited by C. R. Lanman (HOS., Vols. 7 and 8, Cambridge Mass. 1905), a selection of hymns in excellent English translation by M. Bloomfield (SBE., Vol. 42, 1897). A great number of hymns have been translated into German by A. Ludwig in the 3rd volume of his *Rigveda* (Prague 1878), pp. 428-551. A selection of hymns into German verse by J. Grill (*Hundert Lieder des Atharva-Veda*, 2. Aufl., Stuttgart 1888). German translations of books I-V and XIV by A. Weber (*Ind. Stud.*, vols. 4, 5, 13, 17, 18), of book XVIII by the same (SBA 1895 and 1896), of book XV by Th. Aufrecht (*Ind. Stud.*, vol. 1) and of VI, 1-50 by C. A. Florens (*Diss.*, Göttingen 1887). A French translation of books VII-XIII by V. Henry (Paris 1891-95). Bloomfield has treated of the *Atharvaveda* in detail in the *Grundriss* (II, I, B), and I am particularly indebted to this work for this chapter. For the contents and interpretation of the *Atharvaveda*, see also V. Henry, *La magie dans l'Inde antique*, Paris 1904; Oldenberg, *AR.*, 7, 1904, 217 ff.; F. Edgerton, *American Journal of Philology*, 26, 1914, 425 ff. •

<sup>2</sup> In Ancient Rome, too, the *Flamines*, who had to perform the burnt-sacrifices, belong to the oldest priests. (Th. Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, 4. Aufl. I. p. 174 f.)

played no less a part in the daily life of the ancient Indians than in that of the ancient Persians, so often designated as 'fire-worshippers'; the priests of this very ancient fire-cult, however, were still, like the Shamans of Northern Asia and the Medicine-men of the American Indians, 'priests of magic', that is, priest and wizard combined in one person, as in the word 'Magi'—as the Ātharvans in Medea were called—the ideas of wizard and priest are merged together. Thus we can understand that the name Atharvan designated also the 'incantations of the Atharvan or the wizard-priest', that is, the spells and magic formulas themselves. The oldest name, however, by which this Veda is known in Indian literature is Atharvāṅgirasah, that is, 'the Atharvans and the Ṃgiras'. The Ṃgiras, similarly, are a class of prehistoric fire-priests, and the word also, like the word, atharvan, attained the meaning of 'magic formulas and spells'. The two expressions *atharvan* and *āṅgiras*, however, designate two different species of magic formulas: atharvan is 'holy magic, bringing happiness,' while āṅgiras means 'hostile magic, black magic'. Among the Atharvans, for example, are the formulae for the healing of diseases, while among the Ṃgiras are the curses against enemies, rivals, evil magicians, and such like. The old name Atharvāṅgirasah thus means these *two* kinds of magic formulae, which form the chief contents of the *Atharvaveda*. The later name Atharvaveda is merely an abbreviation of 'Veda of the *Atharvans* and *Ṃgiras*'.<sup>1</sup>

Now the *Atharvaveda-Saṁhitā*, usually called simply 'the *Atharvaveda*,' is a collection of seven hundred and thirty-one hymns, which contain about six thousand verses, in the recension which is best preserved.<sup>2</sup> It is divided into twenty

<sup>1</sup> In later literature we meet also with the terms *bhṛgvaṅgirasah* and *bhṛguviataṛa* (*Chāṇḍīya-Upaniṣad* 11) for the *Atharvaveda*. The Bhṛgus also were ancient fire-priests.

<sup>2</sup> It is the Saunaka recension of the Saṁhitā text belonging to the Saunaka school. The Paippalāda recension is known only in one single inaccurate manuscript. The text of the Saunaka recension is published by R. Roth and W. D. Whitney. Berlin, 1856, second edition by Max Lindemann, Berlin, 1924. The *Atharvaveda-Saṁhitā*, with the commentary of Śāyana, has been published by Shankar P. Pandit, 4 vols., Bombay, 1905-1906. The manuscript of the Paippalāda recension has been published by B. B. Lal, 4 vols., Bombay, 1934-1935.

books.<sup>1</sup> The twentieth book was added quite late, and the nineteenth book, too, did not originally belong to the *Samhitā*. The twentieth book is almost entirely composed of hymns which have been taken literally from the *Ṛgveda-Samhitā*. Besides this, about one-seventh of the *Atharvaveda-Samhitā* is taken from the *Ṛgveda*; moreover, more than half of the verses which the *Atharvaveda* has in common with the *Ṛgveda*, are to be found in the tenth book, most of the remaining verses in the first and the eighth book of the *Ṛgveda*. The arrangement of the hymns in the eighteen genuine books is according to a definite plan, and shows fairly careful editorial activity. The first seven books consist of numerous *short* hymns, the hymns in Book I having, as a rule, four verses, in Book II five, in Book III six, in Book IV seven. The hymns of Book V have a minimum of eight and a maximum of eighteen verses. Book VI consists of one hundred and forty-two hymns mostly of three verses each, and the seventh Book consists of one hundred and eighteen hymns, most of which contain only one or two verses. Books VIII-XIV, XVII and XVIII consist throughout of very *long* hymns the shortest hymn (twenty-one verses) being at the beginning of this series (VIII, 1) and the longest (eighty-nine verses) at the end (XVIII, 4). Book XV and the greater part of Book XVI, which interrupt the series, are composed in prose, and are similar in style and language to the *Brāhmaṇas*. Although in this arrangement something quite external—the number of verses—has been considered first, some consideration is also given to the contents. Two, three, four, and even more hymns, which deal with the same subject frequently stand side by side. Occasionally the first hymn of a book is placed at the beginning on account of its contents; thus Books II, IV, V and VII, begin with theosophical hymns, which, no doubt, is intentional. On

been published in facsimile by M. Bloomfield and R. Garbe (*The Kashmirian Atharvaveda*, Stuttgart, 1901). Books I, II, IV-X of the Kashmirian recension have been published with critical notes on the text by Le Roy Carr Barret and F. Edgerton in JAOS., Vols. 26, 30, 32, 34, 35, 37, 40-48, 1906-1923.

<sup>1</sup> We can distinguish three main divisions of the *Samhitā* (cf. Lanman, HOS., Vol. 7, pp. CXXVII ff.): 1. Books I-VI, an appendix to which is contained in Book VII; 2. Books VIII-XII and 3. Books XIII-XVIII, an appendix to which is contained in Book XIX.

the whole we can say thus : <sup>1</sup> the first section of the *Samhitā* (Books I to VII) contains the short hymns of miscellaneous contents, the second section (Books VIII to XII) the long hymns of miscellaneous contents, while Books XIII to XVIII are almost entirely uniform as to their contents. Thus Book XIV contains only marriage prayers and Book XVIII only funeral hymns.

The language and metre of the hymns of the *Atharvaveda* are in essentials the same as those of the *Rgveda-Samhitā*. Yet in the language of the *Atharvaveda* we find some decidedly later forms and some more popular forms : also the metre is not nearly so strictly handled as in the *Rgveda*. Apart from Book XV, which is wholly composed in prose, and Book XVI, the greater part of which is in prose, we occasionally find also other prose pieces among the verses ; and frequently it is not easy to distinguish whether a piece is composed in lofty prose or in badly-constructed verses. It also happens that an originally correct metre is spoiled through an interpolation or corruption of the text.<sup>2</sup> In certain cases, indeed, the facts of language and metre indicate that we are dealing with later pieces. In general, however, no conclusions can be drawn from the language and the metre with regard to the date of the composition of the hymns, still less with regard to the date of the compilation of our *Samhitā*. For it always remains an open question, whether the peculiarities of language and the freedom of metre, by which the magic incantations of the *Atharvaveda* are distinguished from the hymn-poetry of the *Rgveda*, are based upon a difference in the period of origin or on the difference between *popular* and *priestly* composition. (Cf. above, pp. 46 f.)

On the other hand, there are other facts which prove indisputably that our text of the *Atharvaveda-Samhitā* is later than that of the *Rgveda-Samhitā*. Firstly, the geographical and cultural conditions show us a later period than that reflected in the *Rgveda*. The Vedic Aryans have now penetrated further to

<sup>1</sup> On the divisions of the *Atharvaveda-Samhitā* see Whitney and Lanman, HOS., Vol. 7, pp. cxxvii ff.

<sup>2</sup> On the metre of the *Atharvaveda* see Whitney, HOS., Vol. 7, pp. cxxvi f. Irregularities of metre are equally peculiar to the *Atharvaveda* as to all metrical Vedic texts other than the *Rgveda*. To correct the metre everywhere, would mean changing the text arbitrarily. •

the South-east and are already settled in the Ganges country. The tiger, native to the marshy forests of Bengal, and therefore still unknown in the *Rgveda*, appears in the *Atharvaveda* already as the mightiest and most feared of all beasts of prey, and the king, at his consecration, steps upon a tiger-skin, the symbol of kingly power. The *Atharvaveda* knows not only the four castes—Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Sūdras,—but in a number of hymns, the highest privileges are already claimed (as later happens more and more frequently) by the priestly caste, and the Brahmins are already often called the ‘ gods ’<sup>1</sup> of this earth. The songs of magic in the *Atharvaveda*, which, according to their main contents, are certainly popular and very ancient, have no longer even their original form in the *Samhitā*, but are *brahmanised*. These old charms and formulas, whose authors are equally unknown as the authors of the magic incantations and formulas of other peoples, and which originally were just as much ‘ popular poetry ’ as the poetry of magic everywhere is, have already in the *Atharvaveda-Samhitā* partly lost their popular character. We see at every step, that the collection was made by priests, and that many of the hymns were also composed by priests. This priestly outlook of the compilers and partly also of the authors of the hymns of the *Atharvaveda*, reveals itself in occasional comparisons and epithets, as for instance, when, in a charm against field-vermin, it is said that the insects are to leave the corn untouched “ as the Brahman does not touch unfinished sacrificial food ”. A whole class of hymns of the *Atharvaveda*, with which we shall deal below, is concerned only with the interests of the Brahmins, the feeding of priests, the fees for the sacrifice, and such like, and they are, of course, the work of priests.

And just as the brahmanizing of the ancient magic poetry indicates a later period of the collection, so the part which the Vedic gods play in the *Atharvaveda* points to a later origin for the *Samhitā*. We here meet the same gods as in the *Rgveda*: Agni, Indra and so on; but their character had quite faded, they hardly differ from each other, their original signification as

<sup>1</sup> The expression ‘ gods ’ for ‘ priests ’ occurs once also in the *Rgveda* (Rv. I, 128, 8). Cf. Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, pp. 205 f.

natural beings is, for the greater part, forgotten, and as the magic songs deal mostly with the banishment and destruction of demons—the gods being invoked only for this purpose—they have all become demon-killers. Finally, also those hymns of the *Atharvaveda* which contain theosophical and cosmogonic speculations indicate a later period. We already find in these hymns a fairly developed philosophical terminology, and a development of pantheism standing on a level with the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. The fact that even these philosophical hymns themselves are used for magic purposes, that, for instance, a philosophical conception such as *Asat*, 'the non-existent', is employed as a means of destroying enemies, demons, and magicians,<sup>1</sup> shews that here already we have before us an artificial and very modern development of ancient witchcraft.

It is no sign of a later date that the sacredness of the *Atharvaveda* was not recognised by the Indians themselves for a long time, and even to-day is frequently disputed. The reason for this is to be found in the character of this Veda. The purpose of the *Atharvaveda* is, as the Indians say, "to appease, to bless and to curse".<sup>2</sup> Those numerous magic formulas, however, which contain curses and exorcisms, belong to the province of 'unholy magic', which the priesthood and the priestly religion endeavoured more and more to renounce. On the whole there is no essential difference between cult and magic; by means of both man seeks to influence the transcendental world. Moreover, priests and magicians are originally one and the same. But in the history of all peoples there begins a time when the cult of the gods and witchcraft strive to separate (never quite succeeding), when the priest, who is friendly with the gods, renounces the magician, who is in league with the uncanny demon-world, and looks down on him. This contrast between magician and priest developed also in India. Not only the Buddhist and Jain monks are forbidden to devote themselves to the exorcisms of the *Atharvaveda* and to magic, but also the brahmanical law-books declare sorcery to be a sin, place the magician on a level with impostors and rogues, and invite the king to proceed against

<sup>1</sup> Ath. IV, 19, 6.

<sup>2</sup> I.e., to appease the demons, to bless friends and to curse enemies.

them with punishments.<sup>1</sup> Certainly in other places in the law-books of the Brahmans permission to make use of the exorcisms of the *Atharvaveda* against enemies is expressly given,<sup>2</sup> and the ritual texts, which describe the great sacrifices, contain numerous exorcism-formulas and descriptions of magic rites by means of which the priest can annihilate—so runs the formula—“him who hates us, and him whom we hate”. Yet a certain aversion to the Veda of the magic formulas arose in priestly circles; it was not considered sufficiently orthodox and was frequently excluded from the canon of sacred texts. From the beginning it held a peculiar position in the sacred literature. Wherever, in old works, there is talk of sacred knowledge, there the *trayī vidyā*, ‘the three-fold knowledge’, that is, *Rgveda*, *Yajurveda*, and *Sāmaveda*, is always mentioned first; the *Atharvaveda* always follows *after* the *trayī vidyā*, and sometimes is even entirely passed over. It even happens that the *Vedāṅgas* and the epic narratives (*itihāsapurāṇa*) are represented as sacred texts, while the *Atharvaveda* remains unmentioned. Thus in a *Gṛhyasūtra*<sup>3</sup> a ceremony is described, by which the Vedas are to be ‘laid into’ the new-born child. This takes place by means of a formula, which says: “I lay the *Rgveda* into thee, I lay the *Yajurveda* into thee, I lay the *Sāmaveda* into thee, I lay the discourses (*vākovākya*) into thee, the tales and legends (*itihāsapurāṇa*) I lay into thee, all the Vedas I lay into thee.” Here, then, the *Atharvaveda* is intentionally passed over. Even in old Buddhist texts it is said of learned Brahmans that they are versed in the *three Vedas*.<sup>4</sup> The fact, however, that already in one *Samhitā* of the Black *Yajurveda*<sup>5</sup> and also occasionally in old *Brāhmaṇas* and *Upaniṣads* the *Atharvaveda* is mentioned by

<sup>1</sup> SBE., X, II, p. 176. XLV, pp. 105, 133, 363. *Manu*, IX, 258, 290; XI, 64. *Viṣṇu-Smṛti*, 54, 25.

<sup>2</sup> See *Manu*, XI, 33.

<sup>3</sup> *Sāṅkhya-Gṛhyasūtra*, I, 24, 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Suttanipāṭa*, *Selasutta* is especially remarkable, where it is said of the Brahman Sela that he is conversant with the *three Vedas*, the *Vedāṅgas* and the *Itihāsa* as fifth (ed. Fausbøll, p. 101). Also in *Suttanipāṭa*, 1019, it is said of Bhūvarī that he has mastered the *three Vedas* (SBE., Vol. X, II, pp. 98 and 189).

<sup>5</sup> *Taittirīya-Samhitā*, VII, 5, 11, 2, where the plural of *Aṅgiras* stands in the sense of *Atharvaveda*. See above, pp. 105 f.

the side of the three other Vedas shows that this non-mention of the *Atharvaveda* is no proof of the late origin of the *Samhitā*.

But even though it is certain that our *version* of the *Atharvaveda-Samhitā* is later than that of the *Rgveda-Samhitā*, yet it by no means follows from this that the *hymns* themselves are later than the *Rgveda* hymns. It only follows that the latest hymns of the *Atharvaveda* are later than the latest hymns of the *Rgveda*. However, certain as it is that among the hymns of the *Atharvaveda* there are many which are later than the great majority of *Rgveda* hymns, it is equally certain that the magic poetry of the *Atharvaveda* is in itself at least as old as, if not older than, the sacrificial poetry of the *Rgveda*, that numerous pieces of the *Atharvaveda* date back into the same dim prehistoric times as the oldest songs of the *Rgveda*. It will not do at all to speak of a 'period of the *Atharvaveda*'. Like the *Rgveda-Samhitā*, so too the collection of the *Atharvaveda* contains pieces which are separated from each other by centuries. Only of the later parts of the *Atharvaveda-Samhitā* it can be said that many of them were only composed after the pattern of the *Rgveda*-hymns. I consider as erroneous the opinion of Oldenberg,<sup>1</sup> that the oldest form of magic formulas in India was the prose form, and that the whole literature of magic verses and magic songs was only created after the "pattern of its elder sister, the poetry of the sacrificial hymns".

After all it is quite a different spirit that breathes from the magic songs of the *Atharvaveda* than from the hymns of the *Rgveda*. Here we move in quite a different world. On the one hand, the great gods of the sky, who embody the mighty phenomena of Nature, whom the singer glorifies and praises, to whom he sacrifices, and to whom he prays, strong, helpful, some of them lofty beings, most of them friendly gods of life—on the other hand the dark, demoniacal powers, which bring disease and misfortune upon mankind, ghostly beings, against whom the wizard hurls his wild curses, or whom he tries to soothe and banish by flattering speeches. Indeed, many of these magic songs, like the magic rites pertaining to them, belong to a sphere

<sup>1</sup> *Literatur des alten Indien*, p. 41.



of conceptions which, spread over the whole earth, ever recur with the most surprising similarity in the most varying peoples of all countries. Among the Indians of North America, among the Negro races of Africa, among the Malays and Mongols, among the ancient Greeks and Romans, and frequently still among the peasantry of present-day Europe, we find again exactly the same views, exactly the same strange leaps of thought in the magic songs and magic rites, as have come down to us in the *Atharvaveda* of the ancient Indians. There are, then, numerous verses in the *Atharvaveda*, which, according to their character and often also their contents, differ just as little from the magic formulas of the American-Indian medicine-men and Tartar shamans, as from the Merseburg magic maxims, which belong to the sparse remains of the oldest German poetry. Thus we read, for example, in one of the Merseburg magic incantations that "Wodan, who well understood it", charmed the sprained leg of Balder's foal with the formula :

" Bone to bone,  
Blood to blood,  
Limb to limbs,  
As if they were glued."

And quite similarly it is said in *Atharvaveda* IV, 12, in a spell against the breaking of a leg :

" With marrow be the marrow joined, thy limb united with the limb.  
Let what hath fallen of thy flesh, and the bone also grow again. [3]  
Let marrow close with marrow, let skin grow united with the skin,  
Let blood and bone grow strong in thee, flesh grow together with the  
flesh. [4]  
Join thou together hair with hair,<sup>1</sup> join thou together skin with skin,  
Let blood and bone grow strong in thee. Unite the broken part,  
O Plant."<sup>2</sup> [5]

The great importance of the *Atharvaveda-Samhitā* lies in the very fact that it is an invaluable source of knowledge of the real popular belief as yet uninfluenced by the priestly religion, of the

<sup>1</sup> The healing herb is addressed.

<sup>2</sup> Translated by R. T. H. Griffith.

faith in numberless spirits, imps, ghosts, and demons of every kind, and of the witchcraft, so eminently important for ethnology and for the history of religion. How very important the *Atharvaveda* is for the ethnologist, may be shown by the following glance at the various classes of hymns which the collection contains.

One of the chief constituent parts of the *Atharvaveda-Saṃhitā* consists of Songs and Spells for the Healing of Diseases, which belong to the magic rites of healing (*bhaiṣajyāni*). They are either addressed to the diseases themselves imagined as personal beings, as demons,<sup>1</sup> or to whole classes of demons who are considered to be the creators of diseases. And in India, as among other peoples, it is believed that these demons either oppress and torment the patient from outside, or that the patient is possessed by them. Some of these spells are also invocations and praises of the curative herb, which<sup>2</sup> is to serve as the cure of the disease; others, again, are prayers to the water to which special healing power is ascribed, or to the fire which is looked on by the Indians as the mightiest scarer of demons. These songs of magic, together with the magic rites attached to them, of which we learn in the *Kauśikasūtra* which will be mentioned later, form the oldest system of Indian medical science. The symptoms of the various diseases are often described with great clearness in the songs, and, therefore, they are not uninteresting for the history of medicine. This is true particularly of the spells against fever. In the later text-books of medicine the fever is still called 'the king of diseases', on account of its frequency and violence. Numerous charms are addressed to Takman<sup>3</sup>—this is the name of the fever imagined as a demon in the *Atharvaveda*. Thus, for instance, hymn (*Ath.* V. 22), from which a few verses may here be quoted:

" And thou thyself who makest all men yellow, consuming them with  
burning heat like Agni,  
Thou, Fever! then be weak and ineffective. Pass hence into the  
realms below or vanish. [2]

<sup>1</sup> The name of the disease is at the same time the name of the demon. It is exactly the same, for instance, with the Malays: they have as many names of disease-spirits as of diseases known to them.

<sup>2</sup> On the hymn to Takman, see J. V. Grohmann, *Ind. Stud.*, 9, 1895, 281 ff.

Endowed with universal power! send Fever downward, far away,  
 The spotty, like red-coloured dust, sprung from a spotty ancestor. [8]  
 Go, Fever, to the Mūjavans, or, farther, to the Bahlikas,<sup>1</sup>  
 Seek a lascivious Sūdra girl and seem to shake her through and through. [7]  
 Since thou now cold, now burning hot, with cough besides, hast made  
 us shake,  
 Terrible, Fever, are thy darts; forbear to injure us with these. [10]  
 Go, Fever, with Consumption, thy brother, and with thy sister, Cough,  
 And with thy nephew Herpes, go away unto that alien folk."<sup>2</sup> [12]

This pious wish, that the diseases may go to other people, may visit other lands, returns frequently in the songs of the *Atharvaveda*. In a similar manner, the cough is sent away from the patient into the far distance with the spell (*Ath.* VI, 105):

"As the soul with the soul's desires swiftly to a distance flies, thus do thou, O cough, fly forth along the soul's course of flight! [1]  
 As a well-sharpened arrow swiftly to a distance flee, thus do thou, O cough, fly forth along the expanse of the earth! [2]  
 As the rays of the sun swiftly to a distance fly, thus do thou, ~~O cough~~, fly forth along the flood of the sea."<sup>3</sup> [3]

On account of their picturesque, sublime language, some of these magic songs deserve to be valued as examples of lyrical poetry. Certainly we must not expect too much in this poetry; we must be content to be surprised here and there by a pretty simile, as when, in a spell against bleeding, the magician addresses the veins as red-robed maidens (*Ath.* I, 17):

"Those maidens there, the veins, who run their course in robes of ruddy hue, Must now stand quiet, reft of power, like sisters who are brotherless. [1]  
 Stay still, thou upper vein, stay still, thou lower, stay, thou midmost one, The smallest one of all stand still: let the great vessel e'en be still. [2]  
 Among a thousand vessels charged with blood, among a thousand veins, Even these the middlemost stand still and their extremities have rest. [3]  
 A mighty rampart built of sand hath circled and encompassed you.  
 Be still, and quietly take rest."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Names of tribes.

<sup>2</sup> Translated by R. T. H. Griffith.

<sup>3</sup> Translated by M. Bloomfield, SBE., 42, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Translated by R. T. H. Griffith.

However, these sayings are not always so poetical. Very often they are most monotonous, and in many of them, in common with the poetical compositions of primitive peoples, it is chiefly that monotonous repetition of the same words and sentences of which their poetical form consists.<sup>1</sup> Often, too, as is the case with the magic incantations of all peoples, their meaning is intentionally problematic and obscure. Such a monotonous and, at the same time, obscure spell is, for instance, that against scrofulous swellings (*Ath.* VI, 25) :

“ The five and fifty (sores) that gather together upon the nape of the neck, from here they all shall pass away, as the pustules of the (disease called) apacit! [1]

The seven and seventy (sores) that gather together upon the neck, from here they all shall pass away, as the pustules of the (disease called) apacit! [2]

The nine and ninety (sores) that gather together upon the shoulders, from here they all shall pass away, as the pustules of the (disease called) apacit! ”<sup>2</sup> [3]

There is here again a remarkable agreement between Indian and German magic incantations. Similarly, as 55, 77, or 99 diseases are mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*, so in German incantations too, 77 or 99 diseases are often spoken of. For example in this German spell against fever :

“ This water and the blood of Christ is good for the  
seventy-seven kinds of fever.”

A conception which the ancient Indians have in common not only with the Germans but also with many other peoples, is that many diseases are caused by worms. There are, therefore, a series of magic songs, which are intended to serve the purpose of exorcism and driving away all kinds of worms. Thus we read (*Ath.* II, 31) :

“ The worm which is in the entrails, that which is in the head, and that which is in the ribs.....these worms we crush with this spell. [4]

<sup>1</sup> On repetition as the crudest rudimentary form of poetry, cf. H. Schürts, *Urgeschichte der Kultur*, Leipzig and Vienna, 1900, pp. 528 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Translated by M. Bloomfield, SBE., 42, p. 19.

The worms which have settled down in the hills, in the woods, in the plants, in the cattle, in the waters, and those which have settled down in our bodies, this whole breed of worms I crush." [5]

These worms are regarded as demoniacal beings, their king and governor are mentioned, also male and female ones, worms of many colours and fantastical forms, and so on: for instance, in the spell against worms in children (*Ath.* V. 23):

" Slay the worms in this boy. O Indra, lord of treasures! Slain are all the evil powers by my fierce imprecation! [2]

Him that moves about in the eyes, that moves about in the nose, that gets to the middle of the teeth, that worm do we crush. [3]

The two of like colour, the two of different colour; the two black ones, and the two red ones; the brown one; and the brown-eared one; the (one like a) vulture, and the (one like a) cuckoo, are slain. [4]

The worms with white shoulders, the black ones with white arms, and all those that are variegated, these worms do we crush. [5]

Slain is the king of the worms and their viceroy also is slain. Slain is the worm, with him his mother slain, his brother slain, his sister slain. [11]

Slain are they who are inmates with him, slain are his neighbours; moreover all the quite tiny worms are slain. [12]

Of all the male worms, and of all the female worms do I split the heads with the stone, I burn their faces with fire." [13]

Similarly, German spells are directed against 'he-worm and she-worm' and worms of various colours are mentioned in the German spell against toothache:

" Pear-tree, I complain to thee,  
Three worms are pricking me.  
The one is grey,  
The other is blue,  
The third is red,  
I wish they were all three dead." \*

\* Translated by M. Bloomfield, SBE., 42, p. 24.

\* The belief that toothache is caused by worms, is not only prevalent in India, Germany, England and France. In Madagascar, too, it is said of one who has toothache: "He is ill through the worm". And the Cherokees have a spell against toothache which says: "The intruder in the tooth has spoken, and it is only a worm". (James Mooney in the 7th Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1885-86, Washington, 1891, pp. 557 f.).

Very numerous, too, are the incantations which are directed against whole classes of demons, which are looked upon as the originators of diseases, especially against the *Pisācas* (goblins) and *Rākṣasas* (devils). The object of these spells is the scattering or exorcising of these demoniacal beings. An example is found in the song (*Ath.* IV, 36), against the *Pisācas*, from which the following verses, here reproduced in prose, are taken, which indicate a boundless self-assertion on the part of the wizard.

“ I am a pest to the *Pisācas*, as the tiger to the owners of oxen. Like dogs, when they have perceived the lion, they find no loophole. [6]

I cannot bear with the *Pisācas*, nor with thieves and prowlers in the forests. From the village which I enter, the *Pisācas* vanish. [7]

From the village which my violent strength encounters, the *Pisācas* vanish; they have no more evil intentions.” [8]

Along with this belief in devilish beings which bring diseases upon mankind, we find in India also the world-wide belief in male and female demons (*Incubi* and *Succubi*), which visit mortal women and men by night. These are the *Apsaras* and *Gandharvas* of the ancient Indian popular belief, which correspond in every respect and in an amazing manner with the sprites and elves and fairies of the German popular belief. They are originally spirits of nature, river and forest deities.<sup>1</sup> Rivers and trees are their dwelling places, which they leave only to entice mortals and to injure them by unnatural co-habitation. In order to drive away these spirits, the ancient Indian magicians made use of a pleasant-smelling plant, called *Ajaśringī* (*Odina pinnata*), and recited the song (*Ath.* IV, 37), from which I quote the following verses :

“ With thee do we scatter the *Apsaras* and *Gandharvas*. O *Ajaśringī* (*Odina pinnata*), goad (aga) the *Rakshas*, drive them all away with thy smell! [2]

The *Apsaras*, *Guggulū*, *Pīlā*, *Naladī*, *Aukshagandhi*, and *Pramandanī* (by name), shall go to the river, to the ford of the waters, as if blown away! Thither do ye, O *Apsaras*, pass away, (since) ye have been recognised! [3]

<sup>1</sup> According to the magic lore of the Indians, as of other peoples, spirits and ghosts become powerless when recognized and called by name. *Guggulū*, and so on, are names of certain *Apsaras*.

Where grow the asvattha (*Ficus religiosa*) and the banyan-trees, the great trees with crowns, thither do ye, O Apsaras pass away, (since) ye have been recognised! [4]

Of the crested Gandharva, the husband of the Apsaras, who comes dancing hither, I crush the two mushkas and cut off the sepas. [7]

One is like a dog, one like an ape. As a youth with luxuriant locks, pleasant to look upon, the Gandharva hangs about the woman. Him do we drive out from here with our powerful charm. [11]

The Apsaras you know, are your wives; ye, the Gandharvas are their husbands. Speed away, ye immortals, do not go after mortals!'' [12]

Just as in this song in the *Atharvaveda*, the elf in the German incantations is exhorted to leave the houses of mortals, and to depart to the rivers and trees. Just like the Apsaras and the Gandharvas, too, the Germanic water-fairies and elves love music and dancing with which they lure mortal men and women. Just as in the ancient Indian magic song the Gandharva appears now as a dog, now as an ape, now as a youth with beautiful curls, the elf of the German legends makes his appearance in all kinds of transformations. Again, just as the Apsaras of the Indians have their swings in the branches of the banana and fig trees, the water-fairies of German popular belief swing in the branches and on the tree-tops. As here in the *Atharvaveda* a sweet-smelling plant serves to scare away the demons, so too sweet-smelling herbs (like *thyme*) were thought by the Germans to be an excellent means of driving away elves and other spirits. These points of agreement can scarcely be mere coincidences: and we may well agree with Adalbert Kuhn, who compared Indian and German incantations as long as sixty years ago,<sup>2</sup> in assuming that not only certain phenomena of magic lore, but also quite definitely developed forms of magic songs and magic formulas may be traced back to the Indo-European period, and that the German and Indian magic songs thus give us a clue to a kind of prehistoric poetry of the Indo-Europeans.

The prayers for health and long life, called by the Indians *āyusyāni sūktāni*, i.e., 'hymns achieving long life', which

<sup>1</sup> Translated by M. Bloomfield, SBE., Vol. 42, pp. 88 f.

<sup>2</sup> In Vol. XIII of *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft* (1864), pp. 49 ff., 123 ff.

form the second class of the hymns of the *Atharvaveda*, are but little different from the magic spells for healing. These are prayers, as they were used chiefly at family festivals, such as the first hair-cutting of the boy, the first shaving of the youth, and the initiation (*upanayana*). The prayer for a great age, for a life of 'a hundred autumns' or 'a hundred winters', for deliverance from the 100 or 101 kinds of death, and for protection against all sorts of diseases, here recurs again and again in a rather monotonous manner. Book XVII, consisting of a single hymn of thirty stanzas, belongs to this class of hymns. As in the spells of healing, the healing herb which the magic-doctor uses is often invoked, so some of these prayers for long life are addressed to amulets which are to ensure health and long life to the wearer.

In the closest connection with these prayers are the extremely numerous benedictions (*paus̥tikāni*), by means of which the farmer, the shepherd, the merchant hope to gain happiness and success in their undertakings. Here we find a prayer which is used at the building of a house, benedictions for ploughing, for sowing, for the growth of the corn, and exorcisms against field-vermin, spells against the danger of fire, prayers for rain used in rain-magic, numerous benedictions for the prosperity of the herds of cattle, exorcisms of a herdsman against wild animals and robbers, prayers of a merchant for good business and good fortune on his journey, of a gamester for good luck with the dice, proscriptions and exorcisms against snakes, and so on. Only a few of these songs and spells are of any worth as poetry. It frequently happens, however, that in a very mediocre poem of considerable length, we find single verses of great beauty. The most beautiful is perhaps the rain-song (*Ath.* IV, 15). Here we read: Driven by the wind may the clouds pass by, and "while the great, cloud-enwrapped bull roars," may the rushing waters refresh the earth." Prajānya himself is invoked with the words:

"Roar, thunder, set the sea in agitation, bedew the ground with thy sweet rain, Parjanya!

1 The rain-god Parjanya.



Send plenteous showers on him who seeketh shelter,  
and let the owner of lean kine go homeward.'

The least amount of poetry is found in those benedictions which contain only quite general prayers for happiness and blessing or for protection against danger and evil. Among the latter are the so-called *mṛgārasūktāni* (*Ath.* IV, 23-29), a litany consisting of seven hymns of seven verses each. They are addressed respectively to Agni (1), Indra (2), Vāyu and Savitar (3), heaven and earth (4), the Maruts (5), Bhava and Sarva<sup>2</sup> (6), Mitra and Varuṇa (7), and every verse concludes with the refrain-like prayer for deliverance from affliction.

The word 'amhas', however, which we here translate by 'affliction', combines in itself the meanings 'distress, affliction' on one side, and 'guilt, sin' on the other. Therefore, the above-mentioned litany can be reckoned among that class of *Atharvaveda* hymns which is connected with expiatory ceremonies (*prāyaścittāni*). These expiatory formulae and spells for cleansing from guilt and sin are less different from the spells of healing than one might think. For, to Indian ideas, an expiation, a *prāyaścitta*, is necessary not only for 'sins' in our sense, *i.e.*, offences against the moral rule, or transgressions against religion, but by the side of propitiatory formulae for imperfectly performed sacrifices and ceremonies, for crimes consciously and unconsciously committed, for sins of thought, for non-payment of debts, especially gambling debts, for the marriage prohibited by the law, of a younger brother before the elder, and beside general prayers for liberation from guilt and sin and their consequences, we find also propitiatory formulas, and, in connection with atonement ceremonies, songs and spells by which mental and physical infirmities, unpropitious omens (*e.g.*, by the flight of birds or the birth of twins or the birth of a child under an unlucky star), bad dreams and sudden accidents are

<sup>1</sup> *Ath.*, IV. 15, 6, translated by R. T. H. Griffith. In time of drought the cows have become lean on account of scanty food. Now the herdsman must flee before the rain, and better times will come for the cattle (*Weber, Ind. Stud.*, Vol. 18, p. 62).

<sup>2</sup> Names or forms of *Rudra*, a god who plays a prominent part in witchcraft and in the magic songs of the *Atharvaveda*, while he occupies a more subordinate position in the hymns of the *Rigveda*.

'expiated', *i.e.*, warded off or weakened in their effects. The conceptions 'guilt', 'sin', 'evil', 'misfortune' are continually merged one into the other. The fact is that everything evil—disease and misfortune, just the same as guilt and sin—is looked on as caused by evil spirits. Like the invalid or the madman, so is the evil-doer, too, the sinner, possessed by a wicked demon. The same fiends which bring disease, also send the unfavourable omens and the accidents themselves. Thus, for example (*Ath.* X, 3), an amulet, which is tied on the person, is praised extravagantly in twenty-five verses and glorified as a mighty protection against dangers and evils of every kind, against evil magic, against bad dreams and unfavourable omens, against "the sin which my mother, which my father, which my brothers and which my sister and which we ourselves have committed", and at the same time as a universal remedy for all diseases.

Family discord, too, arises through the influence of evil demons or malicious wizards. Therefore, we find in the *Atharvaveda* also a number of spells for the restoration of harmony, which stand midway between the expiatory formulas and the benedictions. For to this class belong not only the spells by which peace and harmony are to be restored in the family, but also formulas by which one can appease the wrath of a great master, or by which one desires to gain influence in an assembly, the art of persuasion in a court of law, and so on. One of the most pleasing of this kind of songs is *Ath.* III, 30, which begins with the words :

" Of one heart and of one mind,  
Free from hatred do I make you,  
Take delight in one another,  
As the cow does in her baby calf.

Loyal to his sire the son be,  
Of one mind, too, with his mother;  
Sweet and kindly language ever  
Let the wife speak to her husband.

Brother shall not hate the brother,  
And the sister not the sister.

Of one mind and of one intent,  
Speak ye words of kindness only." <sup>1</sup>

Of course, some of these reconciliation-spells could also be employed in the restoration of unity between husband and wife. But the magic songs referring to marriage and love form a large separate class of hymns of the *Atharvaveda*; and in the *Kaushikasūtra* we become acquainted with the manifold kinds of love-magic and all the magic rites, which are called 'stri-karmāṇi' or 'women's rites', and for which these songs and spells were employed. There are, however, two sorts of spells belonging to this class. Those of the one kind have a sociable and peaceful character and refer to marriage and the begetting of children. They are pious spells connected with harmless magical rites by which a maiden tries to obtain a bridegroom, or a young man a bride, benedictions upon the bridal pair and the newly-married, magic songs and spells through which conception shall be accelerated and the birth of a male child effected, prayers for protection of the pregnant woman, also of the unborn and the new-born child, and so on. Of this kind is the whole of Book XIV, which contains a collection of marriage verses and is, on the whole, a second, greatly enlarged edition of the marriage verses of the *Rgveda*.<sup>2</sup> More numerous is the second kind of these spells, consisting of wild exorcisms and curses, which refer to love-intrigues and disturbances of the married life. Still fairly harmless are the spells through which a wife wishes to pacify her husband's jealousy, or the verses which are to bring the unfaithful wife back to her husband, or the charm for inducing sleep (*Ath.* IV, 5), in which the following verse proves that the song is used by a lover who steals to his sweetheart: "May the mother sleep, may the father sleep, may the dog sleep, may the eldest in the house sleep, may *her* relations sleep, may all the people round about sleep."<sup>3</sup> Less harmless and partly of

<sup>1</sup> This is an almost literal translation. The translation by J. Muir, *Metrical Translations from Sanskrit Writers*, p. 189, is rather free.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 94 f. The marriage prayers as also the love-charms of the *Atharvaveda* have been translated and explained by A. Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, Vol. V.

<sup>3</sup> Bloomfield (*SBE.*, Vol. 42, p. 105) calls the hymn a 'charm at an assignation', Whitney (*HOS.*, Vol. 7, p. 151) 'an incantation to put to sleep'. See also Th. Aufrecht, *Ind. Stud.*, 4, 337 ff., on the two sleeping-spells, *Rg.*, VII, 55 and *Ath.*, IV, 5.

primeval savageness are the spells by which a person is to be forced to love against his or her will. The belief, existing all over the world, that by means of the *picture* of a person one can harm or obtain power over that person, is also found in ancient India. If a man wished to gain the love of a woman, he made a picture out of clay, took a bow with a string of hemp, an arrow the barb of which was a thorn, the feather of which came from an owl, the shaft of which was made of black wood, and began to pierce the heart of the picture through and through with the arrow—a symbolical piercing of the heart of the beloved with the arrow of the love-god Kāma—while he recited the verses of the magic song (*Ath.* III, 25) :

“ May (love) the disquieter, disquiet thee; do not hold out upon thy bed: with the terrible arrow of Kāma (love) do I pierce thee in the heart.

The arrow, winged with longing, barbed with love, whose shaft is undeviating desire, with that, well-aimed, Kāma shall pierce thee in the heart!

With that well-aimed arrow of Kāma which parches the spleen, whose plume flies forward, which burns up, do I pierce thee in the heart.

Consumed by burning ardour, with parched mouth, do thou (woman) come to me, pliant (thy) pride laid aside, mine alone, speaking sweetly and to me devoted!

I drive thee with a goad from thy mother and thy father, so that thou shalt be in my power, shalt come up to my wish.

All her thought do ye, O Mitra and Varuṇa, drive out of her!

Then, having deprived her of her will, put her into my power alone!’’<sup>1</sup>

A woman acts in a similar manner if she wants to compel the love of a man. She makes an effigy of the man, places it before herself, and hurls heated arrow-heads at it, while she recites the song (*Ath.* VI, 130 and 138) with the refrain: “ Send forth Desire, ye Deities! Let him consume with love of me!’’ Thus she says:

“ Madden him, Maruts, madden him. Madden him, madden him, O Air. Madden him, Agni, madden him. Let him consume with love of me.

[130, 4.]

<sup>1</sup> Translated by M. Bloomfield, SBE., Vol. 42, p. 102.

Down upon thee, from head to foot, I draw the pangs of longing love.  
 Send forth Desire, ye Deities! Let him consume with love of me.  
 [181, 1.]

If thou shouldst run three leagues away, five leagues, a horse's  
 daily stage,  
 Thence thou shalt come to me again and be the father of our sons."<sup>1</sup>  
 [181, 8.]

The wildest incantations, actually bristling with hatred, are those which women use in the attempt to oust their rivals. One example is *Ath.* I, 14 :

" I have taken unto myself her fortune and her glory, as a wreath of a tree. Like a mountain with broad foundation may she sit a long time with her parents!

This woman shall be subjected to thee as thy wife, O King Yama,<sup>2</sup> (till then) let her be fixed to the house of her mother, or her brother, or her father!

This woman shall be the keeper of thy house, O king (Yama), and her do we make over to thee! May she long sit with her relatives, until (her hair) drops from her head!

With the incantation of Asita, of Kasyapa, and of Gaya<sup>3</sup> do I cover up thy fortune, as women cover (something) within a chest."<sup>4</sup>

Language of unbridled wildness, of unmistakable meaning is also found in the songs which are intended to make a woman barren (*Ath.* VII, 35) or to rob a man of his generative power (*Ath.* VI, 138 ; VII, 90).

These love-incantations really belong already to that class of hymns which are designated by the old name ' *Āṅgiras* ',<sup>5</sup> to the class of the curses and exorcisms against demons, wizards and enemies (*ābhicārikāṇī*). Some of the charms of healing, too, can just as well be included in this class inasmuch as they contain exorcisms against the demons of disease. Of this kind

<sup>1</sup> Translated by R. T. H. Griffith. In the refrain (181, 1) I have corrected 'send forth the charm' into 'send forth Desire'.—The author.

<sup>2</sup> The God of Death.

<sup>3</sup> Probably names of famous wizards.

<sup>4</sup> Translated by M. Bloomfield (SBE., Vol. 42, p. 107), who was the first to give a correct interpretation of this difficult charm (*ib.*, pp. 252 f.). Whitney (HOS., Vol. 7, p. 15) describes it as an 'imprecation of spinsterhood on a woman'.

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 92 f.

is among other things, also the second half of Book XVI, which contains an exorcism against nightmare in which this demon is told to visit the enemies. In these exorcisms no difference is made between demons and malicious wizards and witches, and against them, Agni especially, the fire as a demon-destroyer, is called to the rescue. Numerous popular names of demons, otherwise quite unknown, are found in these hymns, in which indeed we continually meet with ideas more genuinely popular than usual. Thus we here come across the view, deeply-rooted in the popular belief—and that, of all peoples—that disease and misfortune can be caused not only by demons, but also by malicious people who are endowed with magic power. The magic by means of which these bad people work evil, is often personified in the songs, and a magic antidote—a healing herb, an amulet, a talisman—is confronted with it. The spells and songs connected with this hostile magic and its magic antidotes are often distinguished by a raciness and ferocity which are not without a certain beauty. In any case, in some of these curses and exorcisms of the *Atharvaveda*, there is more good popular poetry than in most of the sacrificial songs and prayers of the *Rgveda*. An example of this is the song for averting evil magic (*Ath.* V, 14), of which a few verses may here be quoted :

- “ An eagle found thee: with his snout a wild boar dug thee  
from the earth.  
Harm thou, O Plant, the mischievous, and drive the sorcerer  
away. [1]
- Beat thou the Yātudhāmas back, drive thou away the sorcerer;  
And chase afar, O Plant, the man who fain would do us injury. [2]
- As 'twere a strip cut round from skin of a white-footed antelope,  
Bind, like a golden chain, O God, his witchcraft on the sorcerer. [3]
- Take thou his sorcery by the hand, and to the sorcerer lead it back.  
Lay it before him, face to face, that it may kill the sorcerer. [4]
- Back on the wizard fall his craft, upon the curser light his  
curse;
- Let witchcraft, like a well-naved car, roll back upon the sorcerer. [5]  
Whoso, for other's harm hath dealt—woman or man—in  
magic arts,
- To him we lead the sorcery back, even as a courser with a rope. [6]

Go as a son goes to his sire: bite as a trampled viper bites,  
As one who flies from bonds, go back, O Witchcraft, to the  
sorcerer." <sup>1</sup> [10]

In a similar manner in the song (*Ath.* VI, 37), the curse is personified and returned to the cursing one in the following vigorous verses :

" Hitherward, having yoked his steeds, came  
Imprecation, thousand-eyed,  
Seeking my curser, as a wolf the home of one who owneth sheep. [1]  
Avoid us, Imprecation! as consuming fire avoids the lake.  
Smite thou the man who curses us, as the sky's lightning strikes  
the tree. [2]  
Who curses us, himself uncursed, or, cursed, who curses us  
again,  
Him cast I as a sop to Death, as to a dog one throws a bone." <sup>2</sup> [3]

Here we may mention the magnificent hymn to Varuṇa (*Ath.* IV, 16), the first half of which celebrates the almighty power and omniscience of God in language which is familiar to us from the Psalms, but which is extremely rarely heard in India, while the second half is nothing but a vigorous exorcism-formula against liars and libellers, such as are not infrequent in the *Atharvaveda*. I give the first five verses of this remarkable poem in the beautiful poetical translation of Muir,<sup>3</sup> and verses 6-9 in the prose translation of M. Bloomfield<sup>4</sup> :

" The mighty lord on high our deeds, as if at hand, espies;  
The gods know all men do, though men would fain their acts  
disguise. [1]  
Whoever stands, whoever moves, or steals from place to place,  
Or hides him in his secret cell,—the gods his movements trace.  
Wherever two together plot, and deem they are alone,  
King Varuṇa is there, a third, and all their schemes are known. [2]  
This earth is his, to him belong those vast and boundless skies;  
Both seas within him rest, and yet in that small pool he lies. [3]

<sup>1</sup> Translated by R. T. H. Griffith.

<sup>2</sup> Translated by R. T. H. Griffith.

<sup>3</sup> *Metrical Translations from Sanskrit Writers*, p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> *SBE.*, Vol. 42, pp. 88 f.

Whoever far beyond the sky should think his way to wing.  
 He could not there elude the grasp of Varuna the king.  
 His spies, descending from the skies, glide all this world around;  
 Their thousand eyes all-scanning sweep to earth's remotest bound. [4]

Whate'er exists in heaven and earth, whatever beyond the skies,  
 Before the eyes of Varuna, the king, unfolded lies.  
 The ceaseless winkings all he counts of every mortal's eyes,  
 He wields this universal frame as gamester throws his dice. [5]

May all thy fateful toils which, seven by seven, threefold, lie spread  
 out, ensnare him that speaks falsehood: him that speaks the truth they  
 shall let go! [6]

With a hundred snares, O Varuna, surround him, let the liar not go  
 free from thee, O thou that observest men! The rogue shall sit his belly  
 hanging loose, like a cask without hoops, bursting all about! [7]

With (the snare of) Varuna which is fastened lengthwise, and that  
 which (is fastened) broadwise, with the indigenous and the foreign, with  
 the divine and the human,— [8]

With all these snares do I fetter thee, O N. N., descended from N. N.,  
 the son of the woman N. N.: all these do I design for thee." [9]

Roth<sup>1</sup> says with regard to this hymn: "There is no other song in the whole of Vedic literature, which expresses the divine omniscience in such impressive words, and yet this beautiful work of art has been degraded into the exordium of an exorcism. Still, here as with many other portions of this Veda, we may surmise that available fragments of older hymns were used for the purpose of re-furbishing magic formulæ. As a fragment of this kind the first five or even six verses of our hymn may be considered." I fully agree to these words. The supposition of Bloomfield,<sup>2</sup> that the whole poem, just as it is, was composed from the first for magic purposes, does not seem to me at all probable.

There exists a rather large class of magic songs, which are intended for the needs of the kings, partly exorcism formulas against enemies and partly benedictions. Every king was compelled, in India, from the earliest times, to have his Purohita or family priest, and this family priest had to be familiar with

<sup>1</sup> *Abhandlung über den Atharvaveda*; Tübingen, 1856, pp. 29 f., where the hymn is translated into German. For other translations of the hymn see Whitney, *HOS.*, Vol. 7, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> *SBE.*, Vol. 42, p. 369.



“ Formed out of wood, compact with straps of leather, loud is the  
War-drum as he plays the hero.  
Whetting thy voice and vanquishing opponents, roar at them like  
a lion fain to conquer! [1]  
Like a bull marked by strength among the cattle, roar seeking  
kine and gathering up the booty.  
Pierce through our adversaries’ heart with sorrow, and let our  
routed foes desert their hamlets. [3]  
Hearing the Drum’s far-reaching voice resounding, let the foe’s  
dame, waked by the roar, afflicted,  
Grasping her son, run forward in her terror amid the conflict of  
the deadly weapons.” [5]

<sup>1</sup> Translated by R. T. H. Griffith. In Southern India, even in much later times, the Battle Drum was an object of worship, and "was regarded with the same veneration that regiments used to bestow upon the regimental flag in the armies of Europe." H. A. Popley, *The Music of India*, London, 1921, p. 11.

themselves. Among the magic incantations belonging to the 'kings' rites we already find a few which are concerned more with the Purohita, the indispensable family priest of the king, than with the latter himself. And although attacks on witchcraft and exorcisms are not lacking<sup>1</sup> in brahmanical literature, yet the law-book of *Manu* (XI, 33) says clearly and distinctly: "Without hesitation the Brahman shall make use of the sacred texts of the *Atharvaveda*; the word, indeed, is the weapon of the Brahman; therewith may he kill his enemies." Thus also in the *Atharvaveda* we find a whole series of magic incantations and exorcisms in the interest of the Brahmans. In these hymns the inviolability of the Brahmans and their possessions is repeatedly emphasized in the strongest manner, and the heaviest curses are pronounced against those who assail the property and lives of the Brahmans. Besides this, the mystical meaning of the *Dakṣiṇā*, i.e., the sacrificial fee, is emphasized in the most extravagant expressions. The heaviest of all sins is to oppress Brahmans; the highest summit of piety is to give them liberal fees for sacrifice; these are the fundamental ideas running through all these songs, which are among the most unedifying of the whole *Atharvaveda*. Only a few of the better of these hymns contain prayers for enlightenment, wisdom, fame and theological knowledge. All songs belonging to this class might unhesitatingly be included amongst the latest parts of the *Atharvaveda* collection.

Among the later parts of the *Saṃhitā* are also the songs and charms composed for sacrificial purposes, which probably were included in the *Atharvaveda* only in order that the latter, like the other three Vedas, might be brought into connection with the sacrifice and be recognised as a real 'Veda'. Thus, for example, we find two *Apri*<sup>2</sup> hymns and other songs corresponding to the sacrificial chants of the *R̥gveda*. Prose formulæ, too, which correspond to those of the *Yajurveda*, are to be found, for example, in Book XVI, the entire first half of which consists of formulæ in which water is glorified, and which refer to some purification-ritual or other. Book XVIII, which contains the

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 109 f.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 82 f.

prayers pertaining to the death ritual and to ancestor-worship, should be included among this class of hymns. The funeral songs of Book X of the *R̥gveda*,<sup>1</sup> recur here literally, though they are increased by many additions. Also Book XX, which was added quite late, and the hymns of which, with few exceptions, are all borrowed from the *R̥gveda*, is related to the soma-sacrifice. The only new hymns in this book are the very curious 'Kuntāpa hymns'<sup>2</sup> (*Ath.* XX, 127-36). They, too, form part of the sacrificial ritual as liturgies, while in content they coincide partly with the Dānastutis of the *R̥gveda*,<sup>3</sup> by praising the liberality of certain princes; partly they are riddles and their solutions,<sup>4</sup> but partly also obscene songs and coarse jokes. At certain sacrifices, which lasted for many days, hymns of this kind constituted the prescribed conversation of the priests.<sup>5</sup>

The last class of hymns of the *Atharvaveda* which have still to be mentioned, are the hymns of theosophical and cosmogonic contents, which doubtlessly belong to the latest parts of the *Atharvaveda*. Nothing, indeed, seems further from magic than philosophy, and one might well wonder at the fact that the *Atharvaveda-Saṃhitā* contains, besides magic incantations, spells and benedictions, also hymns of philosophical content. However, if we look more closely at these hymns, we shall soon find that they, like the magic songs, mostly serve only practical purposes.<sup>6</sup> It is not the yearning and searching for truth, for the solution of dark riddles of the universe, which inspires the authors of these hymns, but they, too, are only conjurers who pose as philosophers, by misusing the well-known philosophical expressions in an ingenious, or rather artificial, web of foolish and nonsensical plays of fancy, in order to create an impression

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 88 ff.

<sup>2</sup> What the name *Kuntāpa* signifies is not known.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 99 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Like those of the *R̥gveda*. See above, pp. 102 f.

<sup>5</sup> A detailed account of the *Kuntāpa* hymns has been given by M. Bloomfield. The *Atharvaveda* ('Grundriss', II, 1 B), pp. 96 ff. They were probably part of the jollification on the occasion of the bestowal of the *dakṣiṇā*, which "in many instances must have led to gormandizing and drunkenness,.....followed.....by shallow witticisms, by obscene talk, and worse" (*loc. cit.*, p. 100).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. F. Edgerton, *The Philosophical Materials of the Atharvaveda* (Studies in Honor of Maurice Bloomfield, New Haven, 1920, pp. 117 ff.).

of the mystical, the mysterious. What at the first glance appears to us as profundity, is often in reality nothing but empty mystery-mongering, behind which there is more nonsense than profound sense; and indeed, mystery-mongering and the concealment of reality under a mystical veil, are part of the magician's trade. Yet these philosophical hymns presuppose a fairly high development of metaphysical thought. The chief ideas of the Upaniṣads, the conception of a highest god as creator and preserver of the world (Prajāpati), and even the ideas of an impersonal creative principle, besides a number of philosophical terms, such as brahman, tapas, asat, prāṇa, manas, must, at the time when these hymns originated, already have been the common property of large circles. Therefore, too, we must not look upon the theosophical and cosmogonic hymns of the *Atharvaveda* as representing a step in the development of Indian philosophy. The productive thoughts of the truly philosophical hymns of the *Rgveda* have attained their further development only in the Upaniṣads, and the philosophical hymns of the *Atharvaveda* can in no way be regarded as a transition-step from the oldest philosophy to that of the Upaniṣads. "They stand", as Deussen says, "not so much inside the great course of development, as, rather, by its side."<sup>1</sup>

Many a deep and truly philosophical idea occasionally flashes forth in these hymns out of the mystical haze, but in most cases, it may be said that the Atharvan poet is not the originator of these ideas, that he has only utilized for his own purposes the ingeniousness of others. Thus it is certainly an idea worthy of a philosopher, that *Kāla* (Time), is the first cause of all existence. Yet, it is the language of the mystic and not of the philosopher, when we read in *Ath.* XIX, 53 :<sup>2</sup>

"Time, the steed, runs with seven reins (rays), thousand-eyed, ageless, rich in seed. The seers, thinking holy thoughts, mount him, all the beings (worlds) are his wheels.

<sup>1</sup> Deussen, *AGPh.*, I, I, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> On this hymn see F. O. Schrader, *Über den Stand der indischen Philosophie zur Zeit Mahāśāstra und Buddhas*, 1902, pp. 20 f.

With seven wheels does this Time ride, seven naves has he, immortality is his axle. He carries hither all these beings (worlds). Time, the first god, now hastens onward.

A full jar has been placed upon Time; him, verily, we see existing in many forms. He carries away all these beings (worlds); they call him Time in the highest heaven.”  
and so on.

Certainly, the idea that *Kāla* (Time) has brought forth everything, finds worthy expression in the two verses 5 and 6 :

“ Time bogot yonder heaven, Time also (begot) these earths. That which was, and that which shall be, urged forth by Time, spreads out.

Time created the earth, in Time the sun burns. In Time are all beings, in Time the eye looks abroad.”<sup>1</sup>

But immediately in the following verses and in the following hymn (*Ath.* XIX, 54) all kinds of things are enumerated in a quite mechanical manner as originating in Time, and especially the various names of the Divine, as they were known at that time, are enumerated as being created by *Kāla*, thus *Prajāpati*, thus *Brahman*, thus *Tapas* (asceticism), *prāṇa* (breath of life), and so on.

More mystery-mongering than true philosophy is to be found also in the long *Rohita* hymns, of which Book XIII of the *Atharvaveda* consists, in which, moreover, all kinds of disconnected matter appears to be thrown together in motley confusion. Thus, for instance, in the first hymn, *Rohita*, ‘ the red one ’ i.e., the sun or a genius of the sun, is extolled as creative principle—“ he created the heaven and the earth ”, “ with strength he secured the earth and heaven ”—; at the same time, however, an earthly king is glorified, and the heavenly king *Rohita* brought into connection with the earthly king in an intentionally confused manner. In the middle of it, however, we find also imprecations against enemies and rivals and against those who strike a cow with their feet, or make water against the sun. Again in hymn XIII, 3, in a few verses whose pathos

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Bloomfield, *SBE.*, Vol. 42, p. 224

**For example :**

Who with the breath he draws sates earth and  
heaven, with expiration fills the ocean's belly,  
This God, etc."<sup>1</sup>

“ The Ox bears the earth and the sky.  
The Ox bears the wide atmosphere.  
The Ox bears the six wide spheres of heaven,  
The Ox penetrates the whole universe.”

<sup>1</sup> Translated by R. T. H. Griffith.

the fact that he yields milk, "his milk is the sacrifice, the priestly fee is his milking," and we willingly believe that "he who knows the seven inexhaustible milkings of the ox, gains offspring and heaven." This ox is of no more importance than the bull that is extolled extravagantly in *Ath.* IX, 4—he bears all forms in his sides, he was in the beginning an image of the primeval water, and so on,—and that is finally discovered to be only an ordinary sacrificial bull which is to be slaughtered. The fact, however, that this pseudo-philosophy and mystery-mongering at bottom pursues a very practical purpose, is proved by such a hymn as *Ath.* X, 10. Here the great mystery of the cow is announced: heaven and earth and the waters are protected by the cow. A hundred pails, a hundred milkers, a hundred cow-herds are on her back. The gods who breathe in the cow, they know the cow. The cow is the mother of the warrior, sacrifice is the weapon of the cow, thought originated in her. In this manner it proceeds till this secret doctrine reaches its climax in the words: "The cow alone is called Immortality, the cow alone is worshipped as death; the cow became this universe, gods, people, asuras, manes and seers (they all are the cow)." But now follows the practical use: Only he who knows this great secret may accept a cow as a gift, and he who gives a cow to the Brahmans, gains all worlds, for in the cow is enclosed all the highest—*Rta* (the order of the universe), Brahman (the world-soul) and *Tapas* (asceticism)—and:

"The gods live by the cow, and also man lives by the cow;  
The cow is this whole world, as far as the sun looks down."

Just as the Rohita, the Ox, and the Cow are praised as the Highest Being, so there is one hymn (XI, 5) in which the *Brahmacārin*, the Vedic student, is celebrated in a similar way. And again in the still more mysterious cycle of hymns forming Book XV of the *Samhitā*, the Highest Brahman is conceived and exalted as the *Vrātya*,—both as the heavenly *Vrātya*, identified with the Great God (*mahādeva*), the Lord (*īśāna*) Rudra, and as his prototype, the earthly *Vrātya*. The *Vrātyas* were certain, probably Eastern, tribes, whether Aryan or non-Aryan, but certainly living outside the pale of Brahmanism, roving about in

bands—on rough waggons covered with boards in a rather war-like fashion, owners of cattle, having their own peculiar customs and religious cults, whose members, however, could be received into brahmanical society by means of certain sacrificial rites and ceremonies. Such a Vrātya who has already been converted to Brahmanism, seems to be glorified in the Vrātya-book of the *Atharvaveda*.<sup>1</sup>

Deussen<sup>2</sup> has taken endless trouble to discover sense and meaning in the 'philosophical' hymns of the *Atharvaveda*, and to establish certain coherent ideas in them. He finds, for instance, in *Ath.* X, 2, and XI, 8, the idea that deals with the 'realisation of Brahman in man,' and this in X, 2, 'more from the physical teleological aspect,' and XI, 8, 'more from the psychical aspect'.<sup>3</sup> I cannot discover so much philosophy in these hymns; I believe, rather, that here too we have only pseudo-philosophers, who did not announce a new doctrine of the world-soul in man, but who found this doctrine already existing in entirety and proclaimed it in mystically confused disconnectedness. While in a celebrated hymn of the *Rgveda* (X, 121) a deep thinker and a true poet refers in bold words to the splendour of the cosmos and sceptically asks about the creator, in *Atharvaveda*, X, 2, a verse-maker enumerates, one after the other, all the limbs of man, and asks who has created them :

" By whom are the heels of man created? By whom the flesh, by whom the ankles, by whom the well-formed fingers? By whom the openings?...Why have they made the ankles of man below and the knee-

<sup>1</sup> See A. Weber and Th. Aufrecht in *Ind. Stud.*, I, 1850; A. Hillebrandt, *Ritual-Litteratur* ('Grundriss III', 2), pp. 139 f.; M. Bloomfield, *The Atharvaveda* ('Grundriss II', 1 B) pp. 96 ff.; Chas. Lanman, *HOS.*, Vol. 8, pp. 769 ff. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, II, pp. 841 ff. Rājārām Rāmkrishna Bhāgavat, *JBRAS.*, 19, 1896, 357 ff. considers the Vrātyas to be non-Aryans. J. Charpentier (*WZKM.*, 23, 151 ff.; 25, 355 ff.) considers the Vrātyas to be early worshippers of Rudra Siva, s. Keith, *JRAS.*, 1913, 155 ff. According to J. W. Hauer, *Die Anfänge der Yogapraxis*, Berlin, 1922, pp. 11 ff. 172 ff. they were ecstasies of the Kṣatriya class and fore-runners of the Yogins. Cf. Winternitz in *Festschrift für L. Scherman*, *ZB.*, VI, 1924-25, pp. 48 f.

<sup>2</sup> *AGPh.*, I, 1, pp. 209 ff.

Cf. also Lucian Scherman, *Philosophische Hymnen aus der Rig- und Atharva-Veda-Samhitā, verglichen mit den Philosophemen der älteren Upanishads*, Strassburg, 1887.

<sup>3</sup> Deussen, *loc. cit.*, pp. 264 ff.



caps above? Why have the legs been placed apart from each other, and where are the joints of the knees? Who has thought that out?" etc.

Thus it proceeds throughout eight verses. Then follow nine verses, in which all kinds of things that belong to the human organism, and indeed to human life in general, are enquired about: "Whence come likes and dislikes, whence sleep, fear, fatigue, whence all joys and pleasures of mankind? Whence poverty and misery?" etc. In the same tone, all sorts of miscellaneous questions are asked, such as, who has placed water into the body, blood into the veins, whence man has obtained stature, height and name, who has endowed him with gait, intelligence, breath, truth and untruth, immortality and death, clothing, long life, strength and speed, and so on. Then further is asked whence man obtains his mastery over nature, and all these questions are answered with the reply that man as Brahman (world-soul) has become what he is, and attained all his power. So far the hymn is not exactly beautiful, but at least fairly clear. But now follows the usual mystical humbug in the closing verses 26-33, where, for instance, it is said :

"Having sewn his heart and his head together, the Atharvan being above the brain as a purifier stimulated (him) from above the head. [26]

To the Atharvan forsooth this head belongs, a firmly-locked box of the gods, and this head is protected by the breath, by food and by the mind." [27]

I think one would be honouring this kind of verses too much by seeking deep wisdom in them. Therefore, I cannot find such deep sense in the hymn *Ath.* XI, 8, as Deussen does, who tells us that it describes "the origin of man through the contact of psychic and physical factors which themselves are altogether dependent upon Brahman." Just as the liar must sometimes speak truth, in order that one may believe his lies, so the pseudo-philosopher, too, must introduce here and there into his fabrications a real, philosophical idea which he has 'picked up' somewhere or other, in order that one may take his nonsense for the height of wisdom. Thus, the idea of Brahman as the first cause of all existence and of the oneness of man with the

world-soul, is certainly at the basis of the hymn XI, 8. However, I do not think that the author had any idea in his mind while composing the words :

“ Whence was Indra, whence Soma, whence Agni born? Whence originated Tvaṣṭar (“ the Fashioner ”)? Whence was Dhātār (“ the Creator ”) born?

From Indra was Indra born, Soma from Soma and Agni from Agni. Tvaṣṭar came of Tvaṣṭar, and Dhātār is born of Dhātār.”

Immeasurably higher than this verse-making, which is neither philosophy nor poetry, stands *one* hymn of the *Atharvaveda*, which, on account of a few verses which relate to the origin of the earth, is usually included among the cosmogonic hymns, but which is free from any and every kind of mysticism and really contains very little philosophy, but so much the more true poetry. It is the magnificent hymn to Earth, *Ath.* XII, 1. In sixty-three verses the Mother Earth is here extolled as the supporter and preserver of everything earthly, and entreated for happiness and blessing and protection from all evil. Just a few verses in R. T. H. Griffith’s translation must suffice to give an idea of one of the most beautiful productions of the religious poetry of Ancient India :

“ Truth, high and potent Law, the Consecrating Rite,  
Fervour, Brahma, and Sacrifice uphold the Earth.

May she, the Queen of all that is and is to be, may

Prithivī make ample space and room for us. [1]

She who at first was water in the ocean, whom with their wondrous powers the sages followed,

May she whose heart is in the highest heaven, compassed about with truth, and everlasting,

May she, this Earth, bestow upon us lustre, and grant us power in loftiest dominion. [2]

She whom the Aśvins measured out, o’er whom the foot of Viṣṇu strode,

Whom Indra, Lord of Power and Might, freed from all foemen for himself,

May Earth pour out her milk for us, a mother unto me her son. [10]

O Prithivī, auspicious be thy woodlands, auspicious be thy hills and snow-clad mountains.\*

Unslain, unwounded, unsubdued, I have set foot upon the Earth,  
On Earth, brown, black, ruddy and every-coloured, on the firm earth that  
Indra guards from danger. [11]

Produced from thee, on thee move mortal creatures: thou bearest them,  
both quadruped and biped.

Thine, Prithivī, are these Five human Races, for whom, though  
mortal, Sūrya as he rises spreads with his rays the light that is im-  
mortal. [15]

On earth they offer sacrifice and dressed oblation to the gods, men,  
mortals, live upon the earth by food in their accustomed way.

May that Earth grant us breath and vital power,  
Prithivī give me life of long duration! [22]

Let what I dig from thee, O Earth, rapidly spring and grow again,  
O Purifier, let me not pierce through thy vitals or thy heart. [35]

May she, the Earth, whereon men sing and dance with varied shout  
and noise,

Whereon men meet in battle, and the war-cry and the drum resound,  
May she drive off our foemen, may Prithivī rid me of my foes. [41]

Supporting both the foolish and the weighty she bears the death  
both of the good and evil.

In friendly concord with the boar, Earth opens herself for the wild  
swine that roams the forest. [48]

O Earth, my Mother, set thou me happily in a place secure,

Of one accord with Heaven, O Sage, set me in glory and in  
wealth." [68]

This hymn, which might just as well be found in the  
*R̥gveda-Samhitā*, proves that in the Samhitā of the *Atharvaveda*,  
too, there are scattered manifold fragments of ancient poetry,  
although the latter Samhitā, more than the *R̥gveda*, pursues one  
definite purpose. In this collection, too, as in that of the *R̥gveda*,  
by the side of much that is of little value or absolutely worthless,  
there are rare gems of the oldest Indian poetic art. Only *both*  
*works together*, give us a real idea of the oldest poetry of the Aryan  
Indians.

### THE ANCIENT INDIAN SACRIFICE AND THE VEDIC SAMHITAS

The two Samhitās which have so far been discussed have  
in common the fact that they were not compiled for special  
liturgical purposes. Although most of the hymns of the  
*R̥gveda* could be, and actually were used for sacrificial purposes,

and although the songs and spells of the *Atharvaveda* were almost throughout employed for ritualistic and magic purposes, yet the collection and arrangement of the hymns in these Samhitās have nothing to do with the various liturgical and ritualistic purposes. The hymns were collected for their own sake and arranged and placed, in both these collections, with regard to their supposed authors or the singer-schools to which they belonged, partly also according to their contents and still more their external form—number of verses and such like. They are, as we may say, collections of songs which pursue a *literary* object.

It is quite different with the Samhitās of the two other Vedas, the *Sāmaveda* and the *Yajurveda*. In these collections we find the songs, verses, and benedictions arranged according to their practical purposes, in exactly the order in which they were used at the sacrifice. These are, in fact, nothing more than prayer-books and song-books for the practical use of certain sacrificial priests—not indeed written books, but texts, which existed only in the heads of teachers and priests and were preserved by means of oral teaching and learning in the priests' schools.<sup>1</sup> Now, in order to explain the origin of these Samhitās, it is necessary to insert here a few words about the cult of the Aryan Indians. This is the more advisable as a complete understanding of the Vedic literature in general is altogether impossible without a certain insight into the ancient Indian sacrificial cult.

So far back as we can trace the Vedic-Brahmanic religion there have always been two varieties of the cult. We have seen<sup>2</sup> that certain hymns of the *Rgveda* and a large number of songs and charms of the *Atharvaveda* were used as benedictions and prayers at birth and marriage and other occasions of daily life, at funerals and ancestor-worship, as well as at the various ceremonies which had to be performed by the herdsman for the prosperity of the cattle and by the farmer for the growth of the fruits of the field. The Indians call these ceremonies, mostly also connected with sacrifices, '*grhyakarmāṇī*,' i.e., 'domestic ceremonies'. Concerning these the *Gṛhyasūtras*, which will be mentioned later, give us detailed

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. above, pp. 88 ff., 94 ff., 118 f.

information. At the sacrifices which this domestic cult required, the householder himself, who was assisted at most by *one single priest*, the 'Brahman', occupied the position of the sacrificial priest.<sup>1</sup> So far as these sacrifices were burnt offerings, the *one fire* of the domestic hearth served as the altar for their presentation. Beside these sacrifices, which every pious Aryan, whether poor or rich, whether aristocratic or humble, performed according to ancient usage, there were also great sacrificial feasts—especially in connection with the Soma-cult relating to Indra, the god of the warriors,—which could only be celebrated by the aristocratic and wealthy, more especially by the kings. On an extensive sacrificial place set up according to firmly established rules, altars were erected for the *three sacred fires*, which were necessary at every sacrifice of this kind, and a multitude of priests, headed by *four chief priests*, were occupied with the performance of the innumerable, extremely intricate rites and ceremonies required for such a sacrifice. The Yajamāna or 'sacrificer,' the prince or great man, who offered the sacrifice, had very little to do; his chief duty lay in giving the priests a liberal payment for the sacrifice (dakṣiṇā). No wonder that the Brahmans selected these sacrifice-ceremonies, by which they gained the most, as the subject of enthusiastic study, that they developed a regular science of sacrifice, which is set forth in those texts with which we shall become acquainted as Brāhmaṇas, and which form an essential part of the *Sruti*, the 'Revelation', i.e., of that literature to which, in the course of time, divine origin has been ascribed. These sacrifices, therefore, were called '*śrautakarmāṇi*,' 'ceremonies based upon *Sruti*,' in contrast to the domestic (gṛhya) ceremonies, which are based only upon *Smṛiti*, 'memory', i.e., tradition, and possess no divine authority.

Now the four chief priests who were occupied with the *Srauta* sacrifices are: (1) The *Hotar* or 'caller', who recites the verses (ṛcaḥ) of the hymns in order to praise the gods and invite them to the sacrifice; (2) the *Udgātar* or 'singer', who

<sup>1</sup> *Āśvalāyana-Gṛhyasūtra* I, 3, 6: The appointment of a Brahman is optional at domestic sacrifices. *Gobhita-Gṛhyasūtra* I, 9, 8 f. The Brahman is the only priest at the Pākayajñas (i.e., the 'simple sacrifices' of the domestic cult); the sacrificer himself is the *Hotar* (the priest who recites the verses).

accompanies the preparation and presentation of the sacrifices, especially of the Soma libations, with chants (*sāman*); (3) the *Adhvāryu* or 'executor of the sacrifice', who performs all the sacrificial acts, at the same time muttering the prose prayers and sacrifice formulae (*yajus*), and (4) the *Brahman* or high priest, whose office it is to protect the sacrifice from harm. For every sacred act, therefore, every sacrifice too is, according to the Indian view, exposed to a certain amount of danger; if an act is not performed exactly in accordance with the ritualistic prescription, if a spell or a prayer formula is not spoken correctly, or if a melody is sung incorrectly, then the sacred act may bring destruction upon the originator of the sacrifice. Therefore, the Brahman sits in the south of the place of sacrifice, in order to protect the sacrifice: the south being the haunt of the god of death, and the haunt from which the demons, hostile to the sacrifice, threaten the people. He follows the course of the whole sacrifice mentally, and as soon as he notices the least mistake in a sacrificial act, in a recitation or in a chant, he must, by pronouncing sacred words, make good the harm. Therefore, the Brahman is called in an old text "the best physician among the sacrificial priests."<sup>1</sup> But in order to be able to fulfil this office the Brahman must be 'full of the veda'; he fulfils his office as sacrificial priest, 'with the threefold knowledge', *i.e.*, by means of his knowledge of the three Vedas, which puts him in the position of being able instantly to detect every error.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, the three other priests need only know *one* Veda each. The verses with which the Hotar calls the gods to the sacrifice, the so-called 'verses of invitation' (*anuvākyās*), and the verses with which he accompanies the gifts, the so-called

<sup>1</sup> *Satapatha-Brahmana*, XIV, 2, 2, 19. Cf. *Chândogya-Upaniṣad*, IV, 17, 8 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Aitareya-Āraṇyaka*, III, 2, 8, 6. *Satapatha-Brahmana*, XI, 5, 8, 7. Only at a later period was the Brahman brought into relationship with the *Atharvaveda*, so that the *Atharvaveda* was sometimes actually called 'Brahmaveda' or 'the Veda of the Brahman' and the adherents of the *Atharvaveda* declared that the Brahman must be a knower of the *Atharvaveda-Saṃhitā*. In reality the office of the Brahman at the *Śrauta-sacrifice* has nothing to do with the *Atharvaveda*. However, we can understand that the two were connected with each other. For, if the Brahman, as remarked above, officiated as the only priest at *Gṛhya-sacrifices*, he certainly had to be familiar with the benedictions which occur, for the most part, in the *Atharvaveda*.

' verses of sacrifice ' (yājyās), the Hotar takes from the *Rgveda*. He must also know the *Rgveda-Saṃhitā*, i.e., he must have memorized it, in order to compile out of it the so-called Sāstras or ' songs of praise ' which he had to recite at the Soma sacrifice. Thus the *Rgveda-Saṃhitā* stands in a certain relationship to the hotar, although it is in no wise collected or arranged for the purposes of this priest.

However, to the Soma-sacrifice belong not only the songs of praise *recited* by the hotar, but also the so-called stotras or ' songs of praise ', which are *sung* by the udgātar and his assistants.<sup>1</sup> Such stotras consist of song-stanzas, i.e., stanzas (ṛcaḥ) which had been made the bearers of certain melodies (sāman). These melodies, as well as the song-verses with which they were connected, were learnt by the udgātar-priests in the schools of the *Sāmaveda*, and the *Sāmaveda-Saṃhitās* are nothing but collections of texts which have been collected for the uses of the udgātars, not for their own sake, but because of the melodies the bearers of which they were.

Finally, the Adhvaryu-priest, at his innumerable sacrificial rites, has to utter, in low voice, partly short prose formulae, partly longer prayers in prose and verse—the prose formulae and prayers are called *yajus* (plur. *yajūṃsi*), the verses *ṛc* (plur. *ṛcaḥ*).<sup>2</sup> In the *Saṃhitās* of the *Yajurveda* all these prose formulae and prayers, mostly accompanied by rules and discussions on the sacrificial acts at which they are to be uttered, are collected for the purposes of the Adhvaryu-priest, in the order in which they were used at the sacrifices.

We now turn to the discussion of the liturgical *Saṃhitās*, as, according to what has just been stated, we may call the *Saṃhitās* of the *Sāmaveda* and the *Yajurveda*, in contrast to those of the *Rgveda* and the *Atharvaveda*.

<sup>1</sup> In fact the chants (stotras) come first, and then the recitations (Sāstras).

<sup>2</sup> The Hotar *recites* the hymns, i.e., he repeats them aloud in a kind of sing-song, the udgātar *sings* the songs of praise to certain melodies, the adhvaryu *mutter*s the prayers. Only the ' Nigades ', a variation of the Yajus-formulae, which serve the purpose of summoning the other priests to their various occupations, naturally had to be uttered loudly by the adhvaryu.

## THE SAMAVEDA-SAMHITA

Of the many Samhitās of the *Sāmaveda* which are said to have existed once—the Purāṇas even speak of a thousand Samhitās—,<sup>1</sup> only three have come down to us.<sup>2</sup> The best known of these, the *Sāmaveda-Samhitā* of the Kauthumas,<sup>3</sup> consists of two parts, the Ārcika or the 'verse-collection' and the Uttarārcika, the 'second verse-collection'. Both parts consist of verses, which nearly all recur in the *Ṛgveda*. Of the 1810—or, if we subtract the repetitions, 1549—verses, which are contained in the two parts together, all but 75 are also found in the *Ṛgveda-Samhitā* and, mostly in Books VIII and IX of the latter. Most of these verses are composed in Gāyatrī metre or in Pragātha stanzas which are made up of Gāyatrī and Jagatī lines, and doubtless the stanzas and songs composed in these metres were from the beginning intended for singing.<sup>4</sup> The seventy-five verses which do not occur in the *Ṛgveda*, are partly found in other Samhitās, partly in various works on ritual; some may be taken from a recension unknown to us, but some are only pieced together out of sundry verses of the *Ṛgveda* without any proper meaning. Some of the verses of the *Ṛgveda* met with in the *Sāmaveda* offer divergent readings, and it has been believed that a more ancient text might be recognized in them. But Theodor Aufrecht,<sup>5</sup> has already shown that the divergent readings of the *Sāmaveda* are due only to arbitrary, intentional or accidental alterations—alterations such as also occur elsewhere

<sup>1</sup> Later authors also speak of a thousand schools of the *Sāmaveda*. Cf. R. Simon, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der vedischen Schulen* (Kiel, 1889), pp. 27, 30 f.

The Samhitā of the Rāṇayaniyas has been edited and translated by J. Stevenson, London, 1842; that of the Kauthumas by Th. Benfey, Leipzig, 1848, and by Satya-vrata Sāmaśramin, *Bibl. Ind.*, 1871 ff. The Jaiminīya-Samhitā has been edited by W. Caland (*Indische Forschungen*, 2, Breslau, 1907).

<sup>2</sup> About this and the other two Samhitās s. Caland, *loc. cit.*, Introduction. See also Oldenberg, *GGA.*, 1908, 711 ff.

<sup>3</sup> This is proved by the very names 'Gāyatrī' and 'Pragātha', which are derived from the verb 'gā' (resp. *pragā*) 'to sing'. See H. Oldenberg, *ZDMG.*, 38, 1884, 489 ff., 464 ff.

<sup>4</sup> In the preface to his edition of the hymns of the *Ṛgveda* (2nd ed., Bonn, 1877) II, pp. xxxviii ff. See also J. Brune, *Zur Textkritik der dem Sāmaveda mit dem achten Maṇḍala des Ṛgveda gemeinsamen Stellen*, Dias, Kiel, 1909, who comes to the same conclusion as Aufrecht, *loc. cit.*, and Oldenberg, *Hymnen des Ṛgveda* I, pp. 289 f.



where words are prepared for music. For in the *Sāmaveda*, in the Ārcika as well as in the Uttarārcika, the text is only a means to an end. The essential element is always the melody, and the purpose of *both* parts is that of teaching the melodies. The scholar, who wished to be trained as an udgātar-priest in the schools of the *Sāmaveda*, had first to learn the melodies: this was done with the aid of the Ārcika; then only could he memorize the stotras as they were sung at the sacrifice, for which purpose the Uttarārcika served.

The first part of our *Sāmaveda-Saṃhitā*, the Ārcika, consists of five hundred and eighty-five single stanzas (ṛc) to which the various melodies (sāman) belong, which were used at the sacrifice. The word *sāman*, although frequently used for the designation of the text which had been either made or destined for singing, means originally only 'tune' or 'melody'. As we say that a verse is sung 'to a certain tune', thus the Indians say the reverse: This or that melody (sāman) is 'sung upon a particular stanza'. The Vedic theologians, however, conceive the relationship of melody and stanza in such a way that they say, the melody has *originated* out of the stanza. The stanza (ṛc) is, therefore, called the Yoni, *i.e.*, 'the womb', out of which the melody came forth. And although naturally a stanza can be sung to various melodies, and one melody can be used for different stanzas, there are certain stanzas, which, as a rule, may be considered as the texts—the 'yonis', as the Indian technical term goes—for certain melodies. The Ārcika then, is nothing but a collection of five hundred and eighty-five 'yonis' or single stanzas, which are sung to about double the number of different tunes.<sup>1</sup> It may be compared to a song-book, in which only the text of the *first stanza* of each song is given as an aid to the recollection of the tune.

The Uttarārcika, the second part of the *Sāmaveda-Saṃhitā*, consists of four hundred chants, mostly of three stanzas each,<sup>2</sup> out of which the *stotras* which are sung at the chief

<sup>1</sup> See Oldenberg, GGA., 1908, 712 A.

<sup>2</sup> 287 songs consist of 3 verses each, 66 of 2 each, 18 of one verse, 10 of 6 each, 9 of four each, 4 of 5 each, 3 of 9 each; the same number of 10 each, 2 of 7 each, and the same number of 12 each, and one song consists of 8 verses.

sacrifices are formed. While in the Ārcika the stanzas are arranged partly according to the metre, partly according to the gods to which they are addressed (in the sequence: Agni, Indra, Soma), the chants in the Uttarārcika are arranged according to the order of the principal sacrifices.<sup>1</sup> A stotra then, consists of several, usually three stanzas, which are all sung to the same tune, namely to one of the tunes which the Ārcika teaches. We may compare the Uttarārcika to a song-book in which the complete text of the songs is given, while it is presumed that the melodies are already known. It is usually assumed that the Uttarārcika is of later origin than the Ārcika.<sup>2</sup> In favour of this assumption is the fact that the Ārcika contains many 'yonis', therefore, also many melodies, which do not occur at all in the chants of the Uttarārcika, and that the Uttarārcika also contains some songs for which the Ārcika teaches no melody. On the other hand, however, the Uttarārcika is an essential completion of the Ārcika: the latter is, as it were, the first, the former the second course in the instruction of the udgātar.

Both parts of the Saṃhitā give us only the texts as they are spoken. The melodies themselves, in any case in the earliest times, were taught by oral, and probably also instrumental rendering. Of later origin are the so-called Gānas or 'song-books' proper (from gā 'to sing'), which designate the melodies by means of musical notes, and in which the texts are drawn up in the form which they take in singing, i.e., with all the extensions of syllables, repetitions and interpolations of syllables and even of whole words—the so-called 'stobhas', as hoyi, hūva, hoi, and so on, which are partly not unlike our huzzas and other shouts of joy. The oldest notation is probably that by means of syllables, as ta, co, na, etc. More frequent, however, is the designation of the seven notes by means of the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, with which the F, E, D, C, B, A, G, of our

<sup>1</sup> On the stotras of the Sāmaveda and their use at the sacrifice, s. A. Hillebrandt, *Rituallitteratur*, 'Grundriss', III, 2, pp. 99 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Caland [*De wording van den Sāmaveda*, Amsterdam (Akad.), 1907; *Die Jaiminīya-Saṃhitā*, pp. 4 f. and WZKM., 22, 1908, 436 ff.] endeavours to prove that the Uttarārcika is older. Oldenberg, GGA., 1908, 713, 722, disputes this on good grounds. For the question of the origin of the Sāmaveda, s. Caland, *Eene onbekende Recensie van den Sāmaveda*, Amsterdam (Akad.), 1908.

scale correspond. When singing, the priests emphasize these various notes by means of movements of the hands and the fingers.<sup>1</sup> There are, attached to the Ārcika, a Grāmageyagāna ('book of songs to be sung in the village') and an Āraṇyagāna ('book of forest songs'). In the latter those melodies were collected, which were considered as dangerous (taboo), and, therefore, had to be learnt in the forest, not in the village.<sup>2</sup> There are also two other books of songs, the Ūhagāna and the Ūhyagāna. These were composed for the purpose of giving the Sāmans in the order in which they were employed at the ritual, the Ūhagāna being connected with the Grāmageyagāna, the Ūhyagāna with the Āraṇyagāna.<sup>3</sup>

The number of known melodies must have been a very large one,<sup>4</sup> and already at a very early period every melody had a special name. Not only are they often mentioned by these names in the ritual-books, but various symbolical meanings are also ascribed to them, and they play no insignificant part in the symbolism and mysticism of the Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads, especially a few of them, such as the two melodies 'Br̥hat' and 'Rathantara', which already appear in the *R̥gveda*. The priests and theologians certainly did not invent all these melodies themselves. The oldest of them were presumably popular melodies, to which in very early times semi-religious songs were sung at solstice celebrations and other national festivals, and yet others may date back as far as that noisy music with which pre-brahmanical wizard-priests not unlike the magicians, shamans and medicine-men of the primitive peoples—accompanied their wild songs and rites.<sup>5</sup> Traces of this popular origin of the sāman-melodies are seen already in the above-mentioned stobhas or shouts of joy, and especially in the fact that

<sup>1</sup> More details about this the most ancient music of the Indians can be found in A. C. Burnell, *The Arsheya Brāhmaṇa.....of the Sāma Veda* (Mangalore, 1876), *Introd.*, pp. xxviii, xli-xlviii.

<sup>2</sup> See W. Caland, *Die Jaiminiya-Saṃhitā*, p. 10; H. Oldenberg, *GGA.*, 1908, pp. 722 f.

<sup>3</sup> See Caland, *Die Jaiminiya-Saṃhitā*, pp. 2 ff.

<sup>4</sup> A later author gives the number of Sāmans as 8,000! (R. Simon, *loc. cit.*, p. 81.)  
<sup>5</sup> See E. Hillebrandt, *Die Sonnenwendfeste in Alt-Indien* (*Sep. aus der Festschrift für Konrad Hofmann*), Erlangen 1889, pp. 22 ff. 34 ff., M. Blornfield, *The God Indra and the Sāma-veda*, in *WZKM.*, 17, 1903, pp. 155 ff.

the melodies of the *Sāmaveda* were looked upon as possessing magic power even as late as in brahmanical times.<sup>1</sup> There is a ritual-book belonging to the *Sāmaveda*, called *Sāmavidhāna-Brāhmaṇa*, the second part of which is a regular handbook of magic, in which the employment of various Sāmans for magic purposes is taught. We may also see a survival of the connection of the Sāman-melodies with the pre-brahmanical popular belief and magic, in the fact that the brahmanical law-books teach that the recitation of the *R̥gveda* and the *Yajurveda* must be interrupted as soon as the sound of a sāman is heard. Especially distinct is the rule in Āpastamba's law-book,<sup>2</sup> where the barking of dogs, the braying of donkeys, the howling of wolves and jackals, the hooting of the owls, the sound of musical instruments, weeping, and the tone of sāmans are enumerated as sounds at which the Veda-study must be interrupted.

Thus, then, the *Sāmaveda-Saṃhitā*<sup>3</sup> is not without value for the history of Indian sacrifice and magic, and the gānas attached to it are certainly very important for the history of Indian music,<sup>3</sup> even though as yet in no way exploited for this purpose. As a literary production, however, this Saṃhitā is practically worthless for us.

<sup>1</sup> The primary meaning of *Sāman* is probably 'propitiatory song', 'a means for appeasing gods and demons'. The word *sāman* also occurs in the sense of 'mildness, soothing words'. In the older literature, when the *Sāmaveda* is quoted, it is usually with the words: "The Chandogas say". Chandoga means 'Chandas-singer', and *chandas* combines in itself the meanings 'magic song', 'sacred text' and 'metre'. The fundamental meaning of the word must be something like 'rhythmical speech'; it might be connected with the root *chand* 'to please, to satisfy, or to cause to please', (cf. *chanda*, 'pleasing, alluring, inviting').

<sup>2</sup> 1, 8, 10, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Oldenberg concludes his investigations of the *Sāmaveda* (GGA., 1908, 784) with the remark that these literary investigations "after all only touch upon the problems lying on the surface of the *Sāmaveda*"; for, in order to penetrate to greater depths, the philologist would have to be a student of the history of music as well. Since then we have gained an idea of the present-day mode of reciting the Sāmans in E. Felber (*Die indische Musik der vedischen und der klassischen Zeit, mit Texten und Uebersetzungen von B. Geiger*, SWA., 1912), based on the records of the Phonogramm-Archiv of the Vienna Academy. It is still doubtful, however, whether this necessarily teaches us how the ancient Udgātars sang 8,000 years ago. See also R. Simon, *Die Notationen der vedischen Lieder-bücher* (WZKM., 27, 1918, 305 ff.).

## THE SAMHITAS OF THE YAJURVEDA

Just as the *Sāmaveda-Saṃhitā* is the song-book of the udgātar, so the *Yajurveda-Saṃhitās* are the *prayer-books* for the Adhvaryu priest. The grammarian Patañjali<sup>1</sup> speaks of "101 schools of the Veda of the Adhvaryus", and it is conceivable that many schools of just this Veda existed; for with reference to the separate sacrificial acts, such as the Adhvaryu had to execute and accompany with his prayers, differences of opinion and sectarian divisions could easily arise, which led to the formation of special manuals and prayer-books. The least deviation in the ceremonial or in the liturgy was sufficient cause for the formation of a new Vedic school. Up to the present we know the following five *Saṃhitās* and schools of the *Yajurveda*:

1. The *Kāthaka*, the *Yajurveda-Saṃhitā* in the recension of the Kāthaka-school.<sup>2</sup>

2. The *Kapiṣṭhala-Kāthaka-Saṃhitā*, which is preserved only in a few fragments of manuscript.<sup>3</sup>

3. The *Maitrāyaṇī-Saṃhitā*, i.e., the *Yajurveda-Saṃhitā* in the recension of the Maitrāyaṇīya school.<sup>4</sup>

4. The *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā*, i.e., the *Yajurveda-Saṃhitā* in the recension of the Taittirīya school, also called *Āpastamba-Saṃhitā* after the Āpastamba-school, one of the chief schools in which this text was taught.<sup>5</sup>

These four recensions are closely inter-related, and are designated as belonging to the *Black-Yajurveda*. Differing from them is

<sup>1</sup> In the Introduction to his *Mahābhāṣya*.

<sup>2</sup> Edited by L. v. Schroeder, Leipzig, 1900-1910, *Index Verborum* by R. Simon, 1912. For the contents of the Kāthaka see A. Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, 3, 451 ff.; for the text and its interpretation s. Keith, *JRAS.*, 1910, 517 ff.; 1912, 1095 ff.; Caland, *ZDMG.*, 72, 1918, 12 ff.

<sup>3</sup> See L. v. Schroeder, *WZKM.*, 12, 362 f.

<sup>4</sup> Edited by L. v. Schroeder, Leipzig, 1881-1886. Numerous passages from this *Saṃhitā* have been translated into German by L. v. Schroeder, *Indische Literatur und Kultur*, Leipzig, 1887, pp. 110-162. See also Schroeder, *ZDMG.*, 33, 1879, 177 ff.; Caland, *ZDMG.*, 72, 1918, 6 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Edited by A. Weber in *Ind. Stud.*, Vols. 11 and 12, 1871-72; with Śāyana's commentary in *Bibl. Ind.*, 1880-1889 and in *AnSS* Nr. 42; translated into English by A. B. Keith, *HOS.*, Vols. 18, 19, 1914.

5. The *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā* or the *Saṃhitā* of the *White Yajurveda*, which takes its name from Yājñavalkya Vājasaneyā, the chief teacher of this Veda. Of this *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā* there are two recensions, that of the Kāṇva and that of the Mādhyandina-school, which, however, differ very little from each other.<sup>1</sup>

The chief difference between the *Saṃhitās* of the 'black' and the 'white' *Yajurveda* lies in the fact that the *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā* contains only the Mantras, *i.e.*, the prayers and sacrificial formulæ which the priest has to utter, while the *Saṃhitās* of the *Black Yajurveda*, besides the Mantras, contain a presentation of the sacrificial rites belonging to them, as well as discussions on the same. That is to say, in the *Saṃhitās* of the *Black Yajurveda* there is that which is called 'Brāhmaṇa' or 'theological discussion', and which forms the contents of the *Brāhmaṇas* to be discussed in the next chapter, mixed with the Mantras. Now it is easily conceivable that in the prayer-books intended for the use of the *Adhvaryus*, the sacrificial rites themselves too were discussed, for these priests had above all to perform the separate sacrificial acts, and the muttering of prayers and formulas in the closest connection with these acts formed only a small part of their duties. It can, therefore, hardly be doubted that the *Saṃhitās* of the *Black Yajurveda* are older than the *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā*. Only later systematizers among the *Yajurveda*-theologians probably felt the necessity of having a *Saṃhitā* consisting only of Mantras analogous to the other Vedas, as well as a *Brāhmaṇa* separate from it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ed. by A. Weber (*The White Yajurveda*, Part I, *The Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā*..... with the Commentary of Mahīdhara, Berlin-London, 1852). Translated into English by R. T. H. Griffith (*The Texts of the White Yajurveda*), Benares, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> It is usually assumed that the name 'white' *Yajurveda* means 'clear, well-arranged' *Yajurveda*, and that it indicates the clear distinction between sacrificial utterances and explanations of ritual in the same, while 'black' *Yajurveda* means 'unarranged' *Yajurveda*. This explanation, emanating from Indian commentators, seems very improbable to me. But already in *Satap. Br.* XIV, 9, 4, 38 (*cf.* IV, 4, 5, 19) the 'white sacrificial utterances' (*Suklāni yajurṃṣi*) are called *ādityāni*, 'revealed by the sun'; and the *Purāṇas*, too, relate that Yājñavalkya received new sacrificial utterances from the sun (*Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, III, 5). I believe that the 'white *Yajurveda*' owes its name to this connection with the sun. In contrast to this the older *Yajurveda* was then called the 'black' one. It is most improbable "that the *Saṃhitā* of the

Significant, however, though the differences between the single Samhitās of the *Yajurveda* may have been for the priests and theologians of ancient India, yet for us they are quite inessential; and also as to time the various Samhitās of the *Black* and *White Yajurveda* are probably not very distant from each other. If, therefore, in the following lines I give a short description of the contents of the *Vājasaneyi-Samhitā*, then this is quite sufficient to give the reader an idea of the contents and character of the Samhitās of the *Yajurveda* in general.

The *Vājasaneyi-Samhitā* consists of 40 sections, of which, however, the last 15 (perhaps even the last 22) are of later date. The first 25 sections contain the prayers for the most important great sacrifices. The first two sections give the prayers for the New and Full Moon sacrifices (Darsāpūrṇamāsa) with the oblation to the Fathers (Piṇḍapitṛyajña) belonging to them. In the third section follow the prayers for the daily fire-cult, the laying of the fire, and the fire-sacrifices which have to be offered every morning and evening (Agnihotra), and the Sacrifices of the Seasons (Cāturmāsya) which take place every four months. The prayers for the Soma-sacrifice in general,<sup>1</sup> including the animal-sacrifice belonging to it, are to be found in sections IV to VIII. Among the Soma-sacrifices there are such as last *one* day, and such as last several days. To the one-day sacrifices belongs the Vājapeya or 'Drink of Strength', a sacrifice offered originally probably only by warriors and kings, which was connected with a chariot-race, and at which, besides Soma, brandy (surā) also was offered, a drink otherwise prescribed according to brahmanical law.\* Intended exclusively for kings is the 'King's inauguration

white *Yajurveda* is most closely related to the original form of the Veda of the Adhvaryu," as Pischel thinks, KG., 172. Cf. Keith, HOS., Vol. 18, pp. lxxxv ff., on the mutual relationship of the Samhitās of the *Yajurveda*.

<sup>1</sup> The sacrifices of the Ancient Indians fall into two great sub-divisions: *food sacrifices* (in which principally milk, butter, cake, pulp and grain were offered) and *Soma sacrifices* (whose chief component part is the soma-libations). The separate sacrifices may be classed under these two chief groups. The *animal sacrifice* is connected with sacrifices of the first division, as well as those of the second. In connection with every kind of sacrifice is the *fire-cult*, which is, to a certain extent, the preliminary of every kind of worship of the gods.

\* According to the law books, the drinking of brandy is as great a sin as the murder of a Brahman.

sacrifice ' or Rājasūya, a sacrificial feast connected with many a popular usage : a symbolical military expedition, a play at dice, and all sorts of magic rites. The prayers for these two kinds of Soma-sacrifices are contained in sections IX and X. Then in sections XI to XVIII follow the numerous prayers and sacrificial formulæ for the Agnicayana or the ' Building of the Fire Altar ', a ceremony which extends over a whole year, and to which a deep mystical-symbolical meaning is ascribed in the Brāhmaṇas. The fire-altar is named no other than ' Agni ' and is looked upon throughout as identical with the fire-god. It is built of 10,800 bricks, in the form of a large bird with outspread wings. In the lowest stratum of the altar the heads of five sacrificial animals are immured, and the bodies of the animals are thrown into the water out of which the clay for the manufacture of the bricks and the fire-pan is taken. The modelling and baking of the fire-pan and the separate bricks, many of which have special names and a symbolical significance of their own, is executed with much ceremoniousness accompanied by the continuous recitation of spells and prayer-formulæ. The following sections XIX to XXI give the prayers for the Sautrāmaṇī celebration, a remarkable sacrificial ceremony at which again, instead of the drink of Soma, brandy is used and sacrificed to the Aśvins, to the goddess Sarasvatī and to Indra. The ceremony is recommended for one who has drunk too much Soma or with whom the Soma does not agree—and that may have been its original purpose—but also for a Brahman who desires success for himself, for a banished king who desires to regain his throne, for a warrior who desires victory, and for a Vaiśya who wishes to attain great riches. Many of the prayers belonging to this sacrifice refer to the legend of Indra, who was indisposed through intoxication from excessive enjoyment of Soma and had to be cured by the Aśvins and by Sarasvatī.<sup>1</sup> Finally, sections XXII to XXV, with which the old part of the *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā* ends, contain the prayers for the great Horse-sacrifice (Aśvamedha), which only a powerful king, a mighty conqueror or ' world-ruler ', might offer. Old legends and epic poems tell of primeval kings, who performed this

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, p. 74.



sacrifice, and it is looked upon as the highest glory of a ruler, if it can be said of him : " He offered the Horse-sacrifice." The purpose of this great sacrifice is expressed very beautifully in the prayer (*Vājasaneyi-Samhita*, XXII, 22) :

" O Brahman! May in this kingdom the Brahmin be born who shines through sacred knowledge! May the warrior who is a hero, a skilful shot, a good marksman, and a powerful chariot-fighter, be born here! Also the cow which yields good milk, the ox which draws well, the swift horse, the good housewife! May to this sacrificer a hero-son be born who is victorious, a mighty chariot-fighter and eloquent in the assembly! May Parjanya send us rain according to our desire! May our fruit-bearing plants ripen! May happiness and prosperity fall to our share!"

That the last fifteen sections are of later origin is not to be doubted. Sections XXVI to XXXV are designated even by Indian tradition itself as *Khilas*, *i.e.*, 'appendices', 'supplements'. Actually XXVI to XXIX contain only appendices to the prayers of the preceding sections. Section XXX is shown to be an addition even through the fact that it contains no prayers, but only an enumeration of the people who are to be sacrificed at the *Puruṣamedha* or 'Human sacrifice' to the most diverse divine beings or to beings and powers for the moment elevated to divinity. No less than one hundred and eighty-four persons are to be slaughtered at this *Puruṣamedha*, there being offered, to give only a few examples, "to Priestly Dignity a Brahmin, to Royal Dignity a warrior, to the Maruts a Vaiśya, to Asceticism a Sūdra, to Darkness a thief, to Hell a murderer, to Evil a eunuch.....to Lust a harlot, to Noise a singer, to Dancing a bard, to Singing an actor.....to Death a hunter.....to the Dice a gambler.....to Sleep a blind man, to Injustice a deaf man.....to Lustre a fire-lighter.....to Sacrifice a washer-woman, to Desire a female dyer.....to Yama a barren woman.....to the Joy of Festival a lute-player, to Cry a flute-player.....to Earth a cripple.....to Heaven a bald-headed man", and so on. Surely it is hardly conceivable that all these classes of people should have been brought together and killed. We have to deal here probably only with a symbolical rite representing

a kind of 'human sacrifice' by which even the great Horse-sacrifice was to be outdone, but which probably existed only as part of sacrificial mysticism and theory, and in reality hardly occurred.<sup>1</sup> With this agrees also the fact that section XXXI contains a version of the Puruṣasūkta, known to us from the *R̥gveda*—i.e., of the hymn *R̥v.* X, 90, in which the origin of the world through the sacrificing of the Puruṣa and the identification of the world with the Puruṣa are taught, Puruṣa, 'Man', being conceived as the Highest Being,—and that this section, which the Brahman is to recite at the Puruṣamedha, is also called an Upaniṣad, i.e., a secret doctrine. Section XXXII, too, is in form and contents nothing but an Upaniṣad. The Creator Prajāpati is here identified with the Puruṣa and the Brahman. The first six verses of section XXXIV are similarly counted amongst the Upaniṣads, with the title *Śivasamkalpa-Upaniṣad*.<sup>2</sup> The prayers of sections XXXII to XXXIV are to be employed at the so-called Sarvamedha or 'All-sacrifice'. This is the highest sacrifice which exists at all, and which ends with the sacrificer's presenting the whole of his possessions to the priests as sacrificial fee and then retiring as a hermit into the forest there to spend the rest of his days. Section XXXV contains a few funeral verses, which are mostly taken from the *R̥gveda*. Sections XXXVI to XXXIX contain the prayers for the ceremony called Pravargya, at which a cauldron is made red-hot on the sacrificial fire, to represent symbolically the sun; in this cauldron milk is then boiled and offered to the Aśvins. The whole celebration is regarded as a great mystery. At the end of it the sacrificial utensils are so arranged that they represent a man:

<sup>1</sup> So also Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, 2nd Ed., pp. 362 f. and Keith, *HOS.*, Vol. 18, pp. cxxxviii, who says: "There can be no doubt that the ritual is a mere priestly invention to fill up the apparent gap in the sacrificial system which provided no place for man." Hillebrandt (*Rituallitteratur*, 'Grundriss' III, 2, pp. 153), however, considers the Puruṣamedha to be a real human sacrifice. There can be no doubt that human sacrifices occurred in ancient India, though not in the Brahmanical cult—only survivals of it can be traced in the rite of building the brick-altar for the fire, and in the Sunahśēpa legend—, just as cruel human sacrifices occurred even in modern times among certain sects. But this does not prove that the Puruṣamedha was such a sacrifice.

<sup>2</sup> *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā*, 34, 1-6, is found as an Upaniṣad in the *Opusculum of Duperron*, and translated by Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishads des Veda*, p. 837. See above pp. 16 f.

the milk-pots are the head, on which a tuft of sacred grass represents the hair; two milking-pails represent the ears, two little gold leaves the eyes, two cups the heels, the flour sprinkled over the whole the marrow, a mixture of milk and honey the blood, and so on. The prayers and formulæ naturally correspond with the mysterious ceremonies.<sup>1</sup> The XL and last section of the *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā* again contains an Upaniṣad, the very important *Isā-Upaniṣad*, occurring in all Upaniṣad-collections, to which we shall have to refer in the chapter on the Upaniṣads.

If it is already clear from the contents of the last sections that they are of a later date, it is confirmed still more by the fact that the prayers contained in the Saṃhitās of the *Black Yajurveda* only correspond to those of the first half of the *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā*.<sup>2</sup>

Now as regards the prayers and sacrificial formulae themselves, which form the principal contents of the *Yajurveda-Saṃhitās*, they consist partly of verses (ṛc), partly of prose sentences. It is the latter which are called 'Yajus', and from which the *Yajurveda* takes its name. The prose of these prayers is occasionally rhythmical and here and there even rises to poetical flight.<sup>3</sup> The verses which occur are mostly found also in the *Rgveda-Saṃhitā*. The various readings, however, which the *Yajurveda* often presents, are not indeed more ancient than the text found in the *Rgveda*, but they are mostly intentional alterations which were made in the verses, in order to bring them more into line with the sacrificial acts. Only rarely were whole hymns of the *Rgveda* included in the *Yajurveda-Saṃhitās*; mostly they are only single verses, torn from their context, which just appeared suitable to some sacrificial ceremony or other, and were, therefore, included in the Veda of prayers. Therefore, these verses are of less interest to us. The charac-

<sup>1</sup> For details about all these sacrifices and festivals s. Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur* ('Grundriss', III, 2), pp. 97-166; H. Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, 2nd Ed., pp. 437-474; E. Hardy, *Die vedisch-brahmanische periode der Religion des Alten Indiens*, Münster i. W., 1893, pp. 154 ff. and Keith, HOS., Vol. 18, pp. ciii ff.

<sup>2</sup> Only the first 18 Adhyāyas of the *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā* are completely given, word for word, and explained in the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa* of the *White Yajurveda*.

<sup>3</sup> See Keith, HOS., Vol. 18, pp. cxi ff., and H. Oldenberg, *Zur Geschichte der altindischen Prosa* (AGGW. N.F., Bd. 16, Berlin, 1917), pp. 2 ff. On the language of the Yajus.

teristic element of the *Yajurveda* is the prose formulae and prayers.<sup>1</sup>

The simplest prayer that we can imagine is the dedication of a sacrificial gift with the mere utterance of the name of the deity to which it is offered. Formulae of this kind are very numerous in the *Yajurveda*. "Thee for Agni", "thee for Indra", or "this for Agni", or also "for Agni Hail!" "for Indra Hail!" etc.—with such words the gift is laid down or thrown into the sacred fire. A shorter and simpler song of praise to a god can hardly be imagined than the words with which every morning and every evening the fire-sacrifice consisting of milk (Agnihotra) is offered: "Agni is Light, Light is Agni, Hail!" (in the evening), and "Sūrya is Light, Light is Sūrya, Hail!" (in the morning). In equally brief words the purpose of a sacred act is often indicated, when, for instance, the sacrificial priest cuts off the branch with which the calves are driven from the cows, and says at the same time: "Thee for juice, thee for strength!" or the utensil which served for a sacred act is briefly named and a wish attached to it, when, for instance, the piece of wood with which the sacrificial fire is to be kindled, is dedicated with the words: "This, Agni, is thy igniter; through it mayst Thou grow and thrive. May we also grow and thrive!" If one apprehends evil or bad magic from an object used at the sacrifice, a short spell serves to avert it. The halter with which the sacrificial animal is bound to the stake, is addressed thus: "Become no snake, become no viper!" The razor with which the sacrificer, when he is consecrated for the sacrifice, has his beard shaved, is thus addressed by the priest: "O Knife, do not injure him!" At the consecration of a king, the king looks down upon the ground and prays: "Mother Earth, mayest Thou not injure me, nor I Thee!"<sup>2</sup>

The deities are not always invoked or praised in these sacrifice-formulae, but in the most diverse ways sacrificial utensils and sacrificial acts are brought into relation to deities. Thus,

<sup>1</sup> We also take no account here of the Brāhmaṇa-like theological explanations which the Samhitās of the *Black Yajurveda* contain besides the prayers and formulae. What is said in the following chapter about the Brāhmaṇas is applicable to these too.

<sup>2</sup> *Vej.* IV, 1. VI, 12. II, 14. I, 1. III, 9. X, 23.

for example, the priest binds with a rope the sacrificer's wife who takes part in the sacrifice, saying: "A girdle thou art for Aditi." At the consecration for the Soma-sacrifice the sacrificer binds himself with a girdle of hemp and reed-grass with the words: "Thou art the strength of the Aṅgiras,<sup>1</sup> soft as wool; lend me strength!" Then he makes a knot in his under-garment and says: "The knot of the Soma art thou." Hereupon he enwraps his head in his turban (or in his upper garment) muttering: "Thou art Viṣṇu's protection, the protection of the sacrificer." To the horn of a black antelope, which he wraps up in the hem of his garment he says: "Thou art Indra's womb." The priest takes the sacrificial food from the car with the words: "Thou art the body of Agni, thee for Viṣṇu. Thou art the body of the Soma, thee for Viṣṇu." When the priest takes any sacrificial utensil into his hand, he does it with the oft-recurring formula: "At the god Savitar's instigation I take thee with the arms of the Aśvins, with the hands of Pūṣan."<sup>2</sup>

The sacred sacrificial fire must be twirled in the ancient manner with the fire-drill<sup>3</sup>; and the producing of the fire is already in the *R̥gveda* compared with the process of procreation, the lower small board being regarded as the mother, and the upper friction-stick as the father of the child Agni (the fire).<sup>4</sup> Thus are explained the formulæ with which the fire-twirling is performed at the Soma-sacrifice, in which the two friction-sticks are addressed as the pair of lovers, Purūravas and Urvaśī,<sup>5</sup> already known to us, who bring forth Āyu. The priest takes the lower friction-stick with the words: "Thou art the birth-place of Agni", lays two blades of sacred grass upon it, and says: "You are the

<sup>1</sup> The ancient fire and magic-priests, conceived as semi-divine beings.

<sup>2</sup> *Vāj.*, I, 30. IV, 10. V, 1. VI, 30.

<sup>3</sup> This consists of the two 'Arapis' or friction-sticks, of which the one is a small board, the other a pointed stick which is turned round in the small board until a flame results. This is the fire-producing implement still used at the present day by many primitive peoples, e.g. the Eskimos,—doubtless one of the most primitive utensils of mankind.

<sup>4</sup> The Malays of Indonesia still to-day call the small wooden board in which the fire-drill is turned, 'mother' or 'woman', while the twirling-stick itself is called 'man'. The ancient Arabs, too, had two sticks for producing fire by friction, one of which was conceived as female, and the other as male.

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 90 f.

two testicles." Then he lays the small board down with the words: "Thou art Urvasī", touches the frying pan with the twirling-stick, saying: "Thou art Āyu", and with the words: "Thou art Purūravas" places the twirling-stick into the lower friction-stick. Thereupon he twirls with the formula: "I twirl thee with the Gāyatrī metre, I twirl thee with the Trīṣṭubh metre, I twirl thee with the Jagatī metre."

Formula-like turns of this kind, which often convey little or no meaning, are extremely numerous in the Yajurveda. Comparatively rarely do we come across long prose prayers, in which the sacrificer expresses his desires to the deity in simple words, as in the above-quoted beautiful prayer, which was spoken at the Horse-sacrifice. More frequent are the formula-like prayers, which, however, still convey a reasonable meaning, as the following:

"Thou, Agni, art the protector of bodies; protect my body! Thou, Agni, art the giver of life; give me life! Thou, Agni, art the giver of strength, give me strength! Thou, Agni, make complete that which is incomplete in my body." (Vāj., III, 17.)

"May life prosper through the sacrifice! May breath prosper through the sacrifice! May the eye prosper through the sacrifice! May the ear prosper through the sacrifice! May the back prosper through the sacrifice! May the sacrifice prosper through the sacrifice!" (Vāj., IX, 21.)

But still more frequently we find endless formulæ, the meaning of which is very doubtful, for example:

"Agni has gained breath with the mono-syllable; may I gain it! The Āsṛins have gained the two-footed people with the two-syllabic, may I gain them! Viṣṇu has gained the three worlds with the three-syllabic, may I gain them! Soma has gained the four-footed cattle with the four-syllabic; may I gain them! Pūṣan has gained the five regions of the world with the five-syllabic; may I gain them! Savitar has gained the six seasons with the six-syllabic; may I gain them! The Martus have gained the seven tamed animals with the seven-syllabic; may I gain them! Bṛhaspati has gained the Gāyatrī with the eight-syllabic; may I gain it!.....Aditi has gained the sixteen-fold Stoma with the sixteen-syllabic; may I gain it! Prajāpati has gained the seventeen-fold Stoma with the seventeen-syllabic; may I gain it!" (Vāj., IX, 81-84.)

<sup>1</sup> Vāj., V. 2. *Satapatha-Br.* III, 4, 1, 20 ff. Cf. *Satapatha-Br.*, VIII, 5, 2, 1; Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, 8, 1868, pp. 8 ff., 28 ff., and above, pp. 53 f.

However, one of the chief causes of the fact that these prayers and sacrifice-formulæ often appear to us to be nothing but senseless conglomerations of words, is the identification and combination of things which have nothing at all to do with each other, so very popular in the *Yajurveda*. For instance, a cooking-pot is placed on the fire with the words :

“Thou art the sky, thou art the earth, thou art the cauldron of Mātariśvan.”<sup>1</sup> (*Vāj.*, 1, 2.)

Or the cow with which the Soma is bought, is addressed by the priest in the words :

“Thou art thought, thou art mind, thou art intelligence, thou art the priestly fee, thou art suitable for mastery, thou art suitable for the sacrifice, thou art the double-headed Aditi.” (*Vāj.*, IV. 19.)

To the fire which is carried about in the pan at the building of the fire-altar the following prayer is addressed :

“Thou art the beautiful-winged bird, the song of praise Trivṛt is thy head, the Gāyatra melody thine eye, the two melodies Bṛhat and Rathantara are thy wings, the song of praise is thy soul, the metres are thy limbs, the Yajus-formulæ thy name, the Vāmadevya-Melody thy body, the Yajñāyajñiya-melody thy tail, the fire-hearths are thy hoofs; thou art the beautiful-winged bird, go to heaven, fly to the light!” (*Vāj.*, XII, 4.)

Then the priest takes three steps with the fire-pan, and says :

“Thou art the rival-slaying stride of Viṣṇu; mount the Gāyatrī metre, stride along the earth! Thou art the foe-slaying stride of Viṣṇu; mount the Triṣṭubh metre, stride along the air! Thou art the hater-slaying stride of Viṣṇu; mount the Jagatī Metre, stride along the sky! Thou art the hostile-slaying stride of Viṣṇu; mount the Anuṣṭubh metre, stride along the regions of the world!” (*Vāj.*, XII, 5.)

With reference to this kind of prayer Leopold von Schroeder says: “We may indeed often doubt whether these

<sup>1</sup> Mātariśvan, is here the wind-god, hence ‘the cauldron of M.’ meaning ‘atmosphere’.

are the productions of intelligent people, and in this connection it is very interesting to observe that these bare and monotonous variations of one and the same idea are particularly characteristic of the writings of persons in the stage of *imbecility*." He then gives a few examples of notes written down by insane persons which have been preserved by psychiatrists, and these do indeed show a striking similarity with many of the prayers of the *Yajurveda*.<sup>1</sup> We must not forget that here we are not dealing with very ancient popular spells, as we find them in the *Atharvaveda* and in some cases even still in the *Yajurveda*, but with the fabrications of priests who had to furnish the countless sacrificial rites subtilised by themselves with equally countless spells and formulæ.

Some prayer-formulæ of the *Yajurveda* are indeed nothing but magic spells in prose. Even exorcisms and curses, quite similar to those with which we have become acquainted in the *Atharvaveda*, confront us also among the prayers of the *Yajurveda*. For there exist also sacrificial acts by which one can injure an enemy. Thus the priest says to the yoke of the car on which the sacrificial utensils are kept: "A yoke thou art, injure the injurer, injure him who injures us, injure him whom we injure." (*Vāj.*, I, 8.)<sup>2</sup>

The following examples of such sacrificial prayers are given by L. von Schroeder,<sup>3</sup> from the *Maitrāyaṇī-Saṃhitā*:

"Him who is hostile to us, and him who hates us, him who reviles us and him who wishes to injure us, all those shalt thou grind to dust!"

"O Agni, with thy heat, glow out against him who hates us and whom we hate! O Agni, with thy flame, burn against him who hates us and whom we hate! O Agni, with thy ray, radiate against him who hates us and whom we hate. O Agni, with thy powerful strength, seize him who hates us and whom we hate!"

"Death, Destruction, shall seize the rivals!"

<sup>1</sup> L. v. Schroeder, *ILC.*, pp. 118 f.

<sup>2</sup> At the same time an example of the play of words, which is very popular in the Yajus-formulæ. The text reads: *dhūr asi, dhūrā dhūrantam, dhūrā tam yō'smān dhūrvati, tam dhūrā yam dhūrvamāḥ*.

<sup>3</sup> *ILC.*, p. 122.



Just as these exorcism-formulæ have a primitive and popular air, so we find among the riddles, which have come down to us in the *Yajurveda*, besides genuinely theological riddles which well deserve the technical name 'Brahmodya', as they presuppose an acquaintance with Brahman or sacred knowledge, also a few old popular riddles.<sup>1</sup> We have already become acquainted with this certainly very ancient literary type in the *Rgveda* and in the *Atharvaveda*. In the *Yajurveda* we also learn of the occasions at which the riddle-games were customary, indeed, even formed a part of the cult. Thus we find in the *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā* in section XXIII,<sup>2</sup> a number of riddles with which the priests amused themselves at the renowned ancient Horse-sacrifice. A few of these remind us of our juvenile riddles, while others refer to the sacrificial mysticism of the Brāhmaṇas and the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. As examples, the riddles of *Vāj.* XXIII, 45-48, 51, may be quoted :

The Hotar :      " Who wanders lonely on his way?  
                             Who is constantly born anew?  
                             What is the remedy for cold?  
                             What is the great corn-vessel called?"

The Adhvaryu : " The sun wanders lonely on its way,  
                             The moon is constantly born anew,  
                             Fire is the remedy for cold,  
                             The earth is the great corn-vessel."

The Adhvaryu : " What is the sun-like light?  
                             What is the ocean-like flood?  
                             And what is greater than the earth?  
                             What is that of which no measure is known?"

The Hotar :      " Brahman<sup>3</sup> is the sun-like light,  
                             The sky is the ocean-like flood,  
                             And greater than the earth is God Indra,  
                             But it is the cow, of which no measure is known."

<sup>1</sup> On the Brahmodyas s. Ludwig, *Der Rigveda*. Koegel, III, 390 ff. Rud Koegel, *Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur*, I, 1, 1894, pp. 5, 64 ff. includes the Brahmodyas, with which he compares the Old Germanic riddle poetry, in the poetic heritage of the Indo-European period.

<sup>2</sup> Similarly also in *Taittiriya-Saṃhitā*, VII, 4, 18.

<sup>3</sup> This ambiguous word here probably means 'the priesthood', perhaps 'the sacred knowledge'.

The Udgātar: " Into what things has the Puruṣa penetrated?  
And what things are contained in the Puruṣa?  
This riddle, Brahman, I give thee to solve;  
What answer hast thou now to make?"

The Brahman: " The five, it is, into which the Puruṣa has penetrated.  
And these are they which are contained in the  
Puruṣa.<sup>1</sup>  
That is the answer I have thought out for thee;  
In the magic strength of knowledge thou art  
not above me."

These riddle games form an equally important part of the worship of the gods as the prayers and sacrificial formulæ. quately the purpose of the prayers and formulæ, indeed, of the However, the term 'worship' of the gods expresses but inadequately the purpose of the prayers and formula, indeed, of the sacrifices themselves. The majority of the sacrificial ceremonies, as also the Yajus formulæ do not aim at 'worshipping' the gods, but at influencing them, at compelling them to fulfil the wishes of the sacrificer. The gods too, love *panem et circenses*, they, too, wish to be not only fed, but entertained as well: the Vedic texts very frequently assure us that the gods take a particular pleasure in the mysterious, the enigmatic, the barely hinted-at.<sup>2</sup>

In the *Yajurveda* we find besides, already a mode of influencing the gods which prevailed very largely at later periods, and which consists of enumerating as many names and epithets as possible pertaining to a certain god and of worshipping him under all these names, in order to obtain something from him. Thus, in the later literature we find texts which enumerate a thousand names of Viṣṇu or a thousand names of Śiva, the recital of which is regarded as a particularly effective and meritorious work of devotion. The first beginnings of this kind of prayers we find in the *Satarudriya*, the enumeration of the hundred

<sup>1</sup> Puruṣa means 'human being', 'person' and also 'spirit', 'universal spirit'. 'The five' are the five senses, which are contained in the Puruṣa, i.e., in the 'human being' and are permeated by the Puruṣa, i.e., the 'universal spirit'.

<sup>2</sup> "The gods love that which is hinted at, the mysterious", is a sentence often recurring in the Brāhmaṇas, e.g., *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, VI, 1, 1, 2; 11; 2, 8; 7, 1, 28, VII, 4, 1, 10; etc. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, IV, 2, 2. "The gods love that which is hinted at darkly, and hate that which is uttered directly."

names of the god Rudra, in Section XVI of the *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā* and in the *Taittiriya-Saṃhitā*, IV, 5.

Finally, there is yet another kind of 'prayers', as we cannot help calling them, with which we meet already in the *Yajurveda*, and with which also, at later periods, much mischief was done. They are single syllables or words, which convey no meaning at all, or whose meaning has been lost, which are pronounced in the most solemn manner at certain places in the act of sacrifice, and are regarded as immensely sacred. There is, first of all, the sacrificial cry *svāhā*, which we usually translate by 'hail', with which every gift for the gods is thrown into the fire, while the cry *svadhā* is employed in the case of sacrificial gifts to the fathers. Other quite unintelligible ejaculations of the kind are *vaṣat*, *veṭ*, *vāt*, but above all the most sacred syllable *om*. This syllable, originally nothing but an expression of assent,<sup>1</sup> was regarded by the Indians for thousands of years, and still to the present day is regarded, as inordinately sacred and full of mystical significance. In the *Upaniṣads* it is identified with Brahman, the world-soul, and recommended to the wise man as the highest subject of meditation. The *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* (II, 16) says of it: "This syllable is indeed Brahman, this syllable is the Highest; for he who knows this syllable will have all his wishes, whatever they may be, fulfilled." To this syllable 'om' are added the three 'great words', namely, *bhūr*, *bhuvah*, *sva* (explained by the Indians as 'earth, air, sky', which, however, is doubtful) of which it is said in an old text:<sup>2</sup> "This is indeed Brahman, this Truth, this Right; for without these there is no sacrifice."

Centuries later, in the *Tantras*, the religious books of more recent Indian sects, the use of such mystical syllables and words has become prevalent to such an extent that we frequently find nothing for pages, but inarticulated sounds such as *um*, *ām*, *hṛīm*,

<sup>1</sup> According to *Āitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, VII, 18, *om* means, in the language used for the gods, that which is expressed among human beings by *tathā*, 'so be it', 'yes'. In the same way *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* I, 1, 8: "This syllable *om* expresses assent, for when a person agrees to something, he says: 'om'! It is probably purely a coincidence that the syllable 'om' partly agrees with the Hebrew 'amen' in meaning as well as in sound."

<sup>2</sup> *Maitrāyaṇi-Saṃhitā*, I, 8, 6.

ūṁ, eṁ, krom, phat, ah, and so on. It is significant too, that the word *mantra*, which originally designated the verses and prayers (ṛc and yajus) of the Vedic Samhitās, later on had only the meaning of 'magic formula'. Already in the *Yajurveda* we can trace quite clearly the transition from prayer to magic formula—the two had, in fact, never been very strictly separated.

However bare and tedious, unedifying the *Yajurveda-Samhitās* are if we want to *read* them as literary works, so supremely important, indeed, interesting are they for the student of religion, who *studies* them as sources not only for the Indian, but also for the general science of religion. Whoever wishes to investigate the origin, the development, and the significance of *prayer* in the history of religion—and this is one of the most interesting chapters of the history of religion—should in no case neglect to become acquainted with the prayers of the *Yajurveda*.

For the understanding of the whole of the later religious and philosophical literature of the Indians, too, these Samhitās are indispensable. Without the *Yajurveda* we cannot understand the Brāhmaṇas, and without these we cannot understand the Upaniṣads.

### THE BRAHMANAS.<sup>1</sup>

Of the Brāhmaṇas, the second great class of works belonging to the Veda, Max Müller once said: "However interesting the Brāhmaṇas may be to students of Indian literature, they are of small interest to the general reader. The greater portion of them is simply twaddle, and what is worse, theological twaddle. No person who is not acquainted beforehand with the place which the Brāhmaṇas fill in the history of the Indian mind, could read more than ten pages without being disgusted."<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, it is even truer of these works than of the *Yajurveda*, that they are unpalatable as reading, but indispensable to the understanding of the whole of the later religious and philo-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. L. von Schroeder, I.L.C., pp. 127-167, 179-190. Sylvain Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brāhmaṇas* (Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes études), Paris, 1898. H. Oldenberg, *Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft, die Weltanschauung der Brāhmaṇa-Texte*, Göttingen, 1919, endeavours to do justice to the thoughts contained in the Brāhmaṇas. What Oldenberg calls 'pre-scientific knowledge', should, however, be more correctly called 'priestly pseudo-science'. For the prose of the Brāhmaṇas, see Oldenberg, *Zur Geschichte der altindischen Prosa*, pp. 18 ff., 20 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. I.

sophical literature of the Indians, and highly interesting for the general science of religion. The Brāhmaṇas are as invaluable authorities to the student of religion, for the history of sacrifice and of priesthood, as the Saṃhitas of the *Yajurveda* are for the history of prayer.

The word Brāhmaṇa<sup>1</sup> (neut.) means first a single 'explanation or utterance of a learned priest, of a doctor of the science of sacrifice, upon any point of the ritual.' Used collectively, the word means, secondly, a collection of such utterances and discussions of the priests upon the science of sacrifice. For although the Brāhmaṇas fortunately contain much that has only a distant reference to the sacrificial cult, for instance, cosmogonic myths, ancient legends and narratives, yet the sacrifice is the one and only theme from which all the discussions start, on which everything hinges. For the Brāhmaṇas deal consecutively with the great sacrifices, with which we have become acquainted above in the contents of the *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā*,<sup>2</sup> and give instructions on the separate rites and ceremonies, attaching to them observations upon the relations of the separate sacrificial acts to each other and to the spells and prayers, partly quoted literally and partly quoted in abbreviated form.<sup>3</sup> To these are added symbolical interpretations and speculative reasons for the ceremonies and their connection with the prayer formulæ. Where, as is often the case, the views of the learned men differ on certain points of ritual, the one view is defended and the other rejected. Also there is sometimes talk of differences of the ceremonies in different districts, also of modifications of certain sacrificial rites in particular circumstances. The mention of what exactly constitutes the priests' payment, the dakṣiṇā, at every sacrificial act, is never omitted. In the same way it is explained to the sacrificer what advantages, whether in this life or in the life beyond, he can gain by means of the

<sup>1</sup> In several places in the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, the word *bandhu*, 'connection, (neut.) in the sense of 'sacred speech, prayer, sacred knowledge', or from *brahmān* (masc.) 'priest' in general or 'Brahman priest', or also from *brāhmaṇa* (masc.) 'the Brahman, the member of the priestly caste, the theologian'.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 172-76.

<sup>3</sup> In several places in the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, the word *bandhu*, 'connection, relationship', i.e., 'explanation of the deeper connection, the actual significance', occurs, whereas in later passages the word *brāhmaṇa* is used in the same sense. Cf. Weber, *HIL.*, p. 11; *Ind. Stud.*, 5, 60; 9, 351; Oldenberg, *Vorwissenschaftl. Wissenschaft*, p. 4.

various sacrificial rites. In short, if the use of the word ' science ' may be permitted with reference to theological knowledge then we can best designate the Brāhmaṇas as texts which deal with the ' science of sacrifice '.

Very many such texts must have existed. Of this we are assured by the Indians themselves, and it is also confirmed by the many quotations from lost Brāhmaṇas, which we find in our texts. However, the number of even those Brāhmaṇas which are still preserved is by no means small, and moreover, all of them should be classed among the more extensive works of Indian literature. According to the four Vedic Saṃhitās with which we have become acquainted, the four Vedas, as we know, were distinguished, and to each of the latter several Brāhmaṇas usually belong, which issued from various schools (śākhās). We have seen that the Saṃhitās of the *Black Yajurveda* already contained, besides the mantras or prayers, also declarations of opinions and discussions on the purpose and meaning of the sacrifice. In these Brāhmaṇa-like parts of the *Yajurveda-Saṃhitās* we shall see the beginning of the Brāhmaṇa-literature. It was these very directions for the performance of the sacrificial ceremonies and the discussions on the meaning of the ritual, which in the Saṃhitās of the *Black Yajurveda* were directly connected with the Mantras themselves, it was just these which one Vedic school after another made the subject of the individual works. Soon it was regarded as a rule that every Vedic school must possess a Brāhmaṇa. This explains on the one hand the large number of Brāhmaṇas, and on the other hand, the circumstance that some works were designated as Brāhmaṇas, which deserve this name neither for their contents nor for their extent, and which belong to the latest productions of Vedic literature. Of this type are many so-called ' Brāhmaṇas ' of the *Sāmaveda*, which are nothing but Vedāṅgas,<sup>1</sup> also the *Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa* of the *Atharvaveda*. The latter is one of the latest works of the whole of Vedic literature. There was obviously no Brāhmaṇa at all belonging to the *Atharvaveda* in early times. It was not until a later period, when a Veda without a Brāhmaṇa

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter on the Vedāṅgas.

could not be imagined, that an attempt was made to fill this gap.<sup>1</sup>

The most important of the old Brāhmaṇas may here be enumerated.

To the *Ṛgveda* belongs the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*. It consists of forty Adhyāyas or 'lessons', which are divided into eight Pañcakas or 'fifths'. Tradition names Mahidāsa Aitareya as the author of the work. In reality he was probably only the compiler or editor of it. This Brāhmaṇa deals chiefly with the Soma-sacrifice, besides which with only the fire-sacrifice (Agnihotra) and the feast of the consecration of a king (Rājasūya). It is supposed that the last ten sections are of later origin.<sup>2</sup>

In the closest relationship with this Brāhmaṇa is the *Kauṣītaki or Sāṅkhāyana-Brāhmaṇa*, also belonging to the *Ṛgveda*, and consisting of thirty Adhyāyas or 'lessons'. The first six Adhyāyas deal with the food-sacrifice (fire-laying, fire-sacrifice, new and full moon sacrifices and the sacrifices of the seasons), while Adhyāyas VII to XXX deal with the Soma-sacrifice fairly agreeing with the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*.<sup>3</sup> The *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa* is later than the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*. However, while the latter is not the work of one hand and of one period, the *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa* is a uniform work.

<sup>1</sup> For detailed treatment of the *Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa* see M. Bloomfield, *The Atharvaveda* ('Grundriss', II. I.B.), pp. 101-124. The *Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa* has been edited by D. Gaastra, Leyden, 1919. Whilst Bloomfield considers the *Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa* later than the *Vaitānasūtra* (*Der Atharvaveda*, 101 ff., GGA. 1912, No. 1), Caland (WZKM., 18, 1904, 191 ff.) and Keith (JRAS., 1910, 934 ff.) consider it earlier.

<sup>2</sup> Edited and translated into English by Bartin Haug, Bombay, 1863. A much better edition with extracts from Sāyaṇa's commentary by Th. Aufrecht, Bonn, 1879. Edited with Sāyaṇa's commentary in AnSS. No. 92. Translated into English by A. B. Keith, HOS., Vol. 25, 1920. According to Keith (*loc. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.) the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* is probably older than the Brāhmaṇa parts of the *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā*, and certainly older than the *Jaiminīya*- and *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*. On the language of the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* see Liebich, *Pāṇini*, pp. 23 ff. On Mahidāsa Aitareya see Keith, *Aitareya Aranyaka*, *Introd.*, pp. 16 f.

<sup>3</sup> The *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa* is edited by B. Lindner, Jena, 1887, also in AnSS. No. 65, translated into English by A. B. Keith, HOS., Vol. 25, 1920; Chapter X translated into German by R. Löbbecke, *Ueber das Verhältnis von Brāhmaṇas und Śrautasūtren*, Leipzig, 1906. Apastamba mentions the Kauṣītakins, but his quotations from a 'Bahvrca-Brāhmaṇa', that is 'a Brāhmaṇa of the Ṛgvedins' do not occur either in the *Aitareya*- or in the *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa*; they must, therefore, refer to another *Ṛgveda-Brāhmaṇa* which has not come down to us (Keith, *loc. cit.*, p. 46). For critical and exegetical notes on *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* and *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa* see W. Caland, ZDMG., 79, 1918, 23 ff.

'To the *Sāmaveda* belongs the *Tāṇḍya-Mahā-Brahmaṇa*,<sup>1</sup> also called *Pañcaviṃśa*, i.e., 'Brahmaṇa consisting of twenty-five books'. This is one of the oldest Brahmanas and contains some important old legends. Of special interest are the Vrātyastomas, and the description of sacrificial ceremonies by means of which the Vrātyas were received into the community of the Brahmans.<sup>2</sup> The *Ṣaḍviṃśa-Brahmaṇa*, i.e., 'the twenty-sixth Brahman',<sup>3</sup> is only a completion of the *Tāṇḍya* which consists of twenty-five books. The last part of the *Ṣaḍviṃśa* is the so-called 'Adbhuta-Brahmaṇa', a Vedāṅga-text on miracles and omens.<sup>4</sup> The *Jaiminīya-Brahmaṇa* of the *Sāmaveda* is even older than the *Tāṇḍya-Mahā-Brahmaṇa*. This work is of special interest for the history both of religion and legend, but unfortunately the manuscript material is so fragmentary that it cannot be edited. Hitherto only portions of it have been made known.<sup>5</sup>

The *Taittirīya-Brahmaṇa* of the *Black Yajurveda* is nothing but a continuation of the *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā*,<sup>6</sup> for the Brahmanas were already included in the Saṃhitās of the *Black Yajurveda*. The *Taittirīya-Brahmaṇa*, therefore, contains only later additions to the Saṃhitā. We find here only a description of the Puruṣa-

<sup>1</sup> Edited in *Bibl. Ind.*, 1870-1874. An analysis of it has been given by E. W. Hopkins, *Gods and Saints of the Great Brahman*. ('Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences', Vol. 15, 1909, pp. 20-69). Critical notes on it by Caland, *ZDMG.*, 72, 1918, 19 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See above p. 134, and Weber, *HIL.*, pp. 67 f.

<sup>3</sup> Edited by H. F. Eelsingh, Leyden, 1908, and the first Prapāṭhaka by Kurt Klemm, with extracts from Sāyana's commentary, and a German translation (Gütersloh, 1894). Liebhich (*Indogermanische Forschungen*, Anzeiger, 1895, pp. 30 f.) has shown that the language of the *Ṣaḍviṃśa* is pre-pāṇinian.

<sup>4</sup> Edited and translated into German by A. Weber, *Zwei vedische Texte über Omina und Portenta*, ABA., 1858.

<sup>5</sup> A selection from the *Jaiminīya-Brahmaṇa*, texts with German translations, has been edited by W. Caland (*Verhandeligen der kon. Akad. van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam*, Afd. Lett. Deel I, N.R.D., XIX, No. 4) 1919. Legends from the *Jaiminīya-Brahmaṇa* have been made known before by A. C. Burnell and W. D. Whitney, *Ind. Ant.*, 13, 1894, 16 ff., 21 ff. and by H. Oertel in *JAOS.*, Vols. 14, 15, 18, 19, 23, 26, 28, in OC., XI, Paris 1897, I, 225 ff. and in *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Vol. 15, 1909. See also Caland, *WZKM.*, 28, 1914, 61 ff. and *Over en uit het Jaiminīya-Brahmaṇa* ('Verslagen en Mededeelingen der kon. Akademie van Wetensch.', Afd. Lett., 5, I) Amsterdam, 1914. The *Saṭyāyana-Brahmaṇa* of the *Sāmaveda* is only known by quotations (especially in Sāyana's *Āgvedabhāṣya*), see H. Oertel, *JAOS.*, 18, 1897, pp. 15 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Editions in *Bibl. Ind.*, 1855-1890, and *AnSS.* No. 37. For the contents of the *Taittirīya-Brahmaṇa*, see Keith, *HOS.*, Vol. 18, pp. lxxvi ff.



medha, the symbolical 'human sacrifice',<sup>1</sup> and the fact that the sacrifice is missing in the *Samhitā* is one of the many proofs that it is only a rather late production of the science of sacrifice.

To the *White Yajurveda* belongs the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, 'the Brāhmaṇa of the Hundred Paths', so called because it consists of one hundred Adhyāyas or 'lessons'. This is the best known, the most extensive, and doubtless, also on account of its contents the most important of all the Brāhmaṇas.<sup>2</sup> As in the case of the *Vājasaneyi-Samhitā*, there are two recensions of this Brāhmaṇa, that of the Kāṇvas and that of the Mādhyandinas. In the latter the hundred Adhyāyas are distributed among 14 books (Kāṇḍas). The first nine books are simply a continuous commentary on the first eighteen sections of the *Vājasaneyi-Samhitā*. They are decidedly older than the last five books. Probably also Books I to V are more closely connected. In them Yajñavalkya, who at the end of Book XIV is called the author of the whole *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, is often mentioned as the teacher whose authority is conclusive. On the other hand, in Books VI to IX, which deal with the fire-altar building (Agnicayana), Yajñavalkya is not mentioned at all. Instead of him another teacher, Sāṇḍilya, is quoted as an authority; and the same Sāṇḍilya is also regarded as the proclaimer of the Agnirahasya, i.e., of the 'fire-altar mystery', which forms the contents of Book X. Books XI to XIV, besides appendices to the preceding books, also contain a few interesting sections on subjects which are otherwise not dealt with in the Brāhmaṇas, thus upon the Upanayana, the initiation of a pupil or the taking of the pupil to the teacher who is to instruct

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 152 f.

<sup>2</sup> The text was published by A. Weber (*The White Yajurveda*, Part II. The *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, Berlin and London, 1855). There is an excellent English translation with important introductions and notes, by Julius Eggeling in five volumes. (SBE., Vols. 12, 26, 41, 48 and 44). The *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa* is generally considered as one of the latest Brāhmaṇas; see Keith, HOS., Vol. 18, pp. cii f. According to P. Oltramare *L'histoire des idées théosophiques dans l'Inde*, I, p. 96, many passages in the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa* show the trace of the influence of the doctrines of the Upaniṣads. Wackernagel, *Altind. Grammatik* I, p. xxx declares that as to language, the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa* and the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* too is 'comparatively modern', whilst he considers the *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa* and the *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa* as the most ancient Brāhmaṇas. (For the opposite view, see Keith, HOS., Vol. 25, pp. 46 f.). Oldenberg, *Zur Geschichte der altindischen Prosa*, pp. 20 ff., gives the examples illustrating the 'earlier' Brāhmaṇa period from the *Taittirīya-Samhitā*, and those for the 'later' period from the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*.

him in the sacred texts (XI, 5, 4), upon the daily Veda study (svadhyāya),<sup>1</sup> which is looked upon as a sacrifice to the god Brahman (XI, 5, 6-8), and upon the death-ceremonies and the raising of a burial mound (XIII, 8). The Horse-sacrifice (Aśvamedha), the 'human sacrifice' (Puruṣamedha) and the 'sacrifice of all' (Sarvamedha) are dealt with in Book XIII, and the Pravargya ceremony in Book XIV. At the close of this extensive work is the old and important *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* with which we shall become acquainted in the next chapter.

The difference between the Brāhmaṇas which belong to the separate Vedas lies chiefly in the fact that the Brāhmaṇas of the *R̥gveda*, in the presentation of the ritual, emphasize that which is of importance to the Hotar-priest, who has to recite the verses and hymns of the *R̥gveda*, while the Brāhmaṇas of the *Sāmaveda* are chiefly concerned with the duties of the Udgātar, and those of the *Yajurveda* with the sacrificial acts to be performed by the Adhvaryu. In the essentials of their contents the Brāhmaṇas all agree fairly well with one another. In the main the same subjects are always dealt with; and all these works bear the same stamp. This is the more noticeable, as we are compelled to assume a period of several centuries for the origin and propagation of this literature. If we could believe the tradition which, in the so-called Vamśa<sup>2</sup> or 'Genealogies', specifies genealogical trees of teachers with fifty to sixty names, then not even a thousand years would suffice to locate all the generations of teachers whose names are mentioned. These genealogies have indeed the object of tracing back the origin of the sacrifice theory

<sup>1</sup> The 'learning' or reciting of the Veda by the Indians as a religious duty has an exact parallel in the Thora-reading or 'learning' of the Jews.

<sup>2</sup> Connected with the *Sāmaveda*, there is a special so-called 'Brāhmaṇa', the *Vamśa-Brāhmaṇa* (edited and explained by A. Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, 4, 371 ff.) which contains only a list of 53 teachers, the last of whom, Kaśyapa, is said to have received the tradition from god Agni. There are four different Vamśas in the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*. The one given at the conclusion of the work begins with the words: "We have this from the son of Bhāradvāja, the son of Bhāradvāja from the son of Vātsīmāṇḍavī," etc. Then follow 40 teachers, all only mentioned by their *maternal* names. Only as the 45th in the list does Yājñavalkya appear. Uddālaka, who is known to us from the Upaniṣads, being mentioned as his teacher. The last (55th) human teacher is Kaśyapa Naidhruvi, to whom the Brāhmaṇa is said to have been revealed by Vāc (the goddess of speech). She is said to have received it from Ambhrī (the voice of thunder) and the latter from Aditya (the sun).

to some deity or other—Brahman, Prajāpati or the Sun—but they also contains so many names which have certainly the appearance of being genuine family-names, that it is difficult to look upon them as pure fiction. However, even quite apart from these lists of teachers, there still remain the numerous names of teachers who, in the Brāhmaṇas themselves, are quoted as authorities, and the fact remains that the collectors and compilers of the Brāhmaṇas shift the beginnings of the science of sacrifice as laid down in them, back to a far-distant past. This sacrifice-science itself, however, requires centuries for its development.

If we ask in which period we are to locate these centuries of the development of the Brāhmaṇa literature, there can be as little question of any definite dates as there is in determining the period of the Saṃhitās. The only certainty is, that the Saṃhitā of the *Rgveda* was already concluded and that the hymn-poetry already belonged to a far-distant past, when prayers and sacrifices were first made the subject of a special 'science'. It is probably certain, too, that the great majority of magic incantations, spells and formulae of the *Atharvaveda* and of the *Yajurveda*, as well as the melodies of the *Sāmaveda*, are much older than the speculations of the Brāhmaṇas. On the other hand, it is likely that the final compilation of the Saṃhitās of the *Atharvaveda* and of the liturgical Saṃhitās was about contemporaneous with the beginnings of the Brāhmaṇa literature, so that the latest portions of these Saṃhitās might be of the same date as the earliest portions of the Brāhmaṇas. At least the geographical and cultural conditions indicate this, as they are represented to us on the one hand in the Saṃhitās of the *Atharvaveda* and *Yajurveda*, and on the other hand in the Brāhmaṇas, in comparison with those of the *Rgveda*. We have seen how, in the period of the *Atharvaveda-Saṃhitā*, the Aryan tribes of the Indus land, the home of the *Rgveda*, had already spread themselves further east into the region of the Ganges and the Jamnā. The region which is indicated by the Saṃhitās of the *Yajurveda* as well as by all the Brāhmaṇas, is the land of the *Kurus* and *Pañcālas*, those two tribes whose mighty battles form the nucleus of the great Indian epic, the *Mahābhāratha*. *Kurukṣetra*, 'the land of the Kurus', in particular, is regarded as a holy land, in which, as it is frequently

put, the gods themselves celebrated their sacrificial feasts. This land Kurukṣetra lay between the two small rivers Sarasvatī and Drṣādvatī in the plain to the west of the Ganges and Jamnā : and the neighbouring region of the Pañcālas stretched from the north-west to the south-east between the Ganges and Jamnā. This part of India, the Doāb between Ganges and Jamnā from the neighbourhood of Delhi to as far as Mathurā, is still in a later period, regarded as the actual ' Brahman land ' (Brahmāvarta), whose customs according to the brahmanical law-books should be adopted for the whole of India. This region is not only the land of the origin of the Saṃhitās of the *Yajurveda* and of the Brāhmaṇas, but also the home of the whole of brahmanical culture, which first spread from here over the whole of India.

The religious and social conditions have changed very much since the time of the *Ṛgveda*. The old gods of the *Ṛgveda* still appear in the *Yajurveda-Saṃhitās* and in the Brāhmaṇas, just as in the *Atharvaveda*. But their significance has wholly faded, and they owe all the power they possess to the sacrifice alone. Furthermore, some gods who still play a subordinate part in the *Ṛgveda*, step into far greater prominence in the liturgical Saṃhitās and in the Brāhmaṇas, as *Viṣṇu*, and especially *Rudra* or *Śiva*. Paramount importance now also attaches to *Prajāpati*, ' the lord of creatures ', who is regarded as the father of the gods (devas) as well as of the demons (asuras). The word *Asura*,<sup>1</sup> which, corresponding to the Avestic Ahura, in the *Ṛgveda* still has the meaning of ' endowed with miraculous powers ' or ' God ', and appears especially often as an epithet of the god Varuṇa, henceforth has exclusively the meaning of ' demon ' which it always has in later Sanskrit, and again and again mention is made in the Brāhmaṇas of the battles between Devas and Asuras. Yet there is nothing titanic about these battles, as, for instance, the battle between Indra and Vṛtra in the *Ṛgveda*, but the gods and Asuras exert themselves to surpass each other by means of sacrifices. For in these Brahmanas the gods actually have to make sacrifices if they wish to accomplish anything. Nothing is more significant for the Brāhmaṇas than the tremendous importance which is

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 67.

ascribed to the sacrifice. The sacrifice is here no longer the means to an end, but it is an aim in itself, indeed, the highest aim of existence. The sacrifice is also a power which overwhelms all, indeed, a creative force of Nature. Therefore, the sacrifice is identical with Prajāpati, the creator. 'Prajāpati is the sacrifice' is an oft-repeated sentence in the Brāhmaṇas. "The soul of all beings, of all gods is this, the sacrifice." "Truly, he who consecrates himself for the sacrifice, he consecrates himself for the All, for only after the sacrifice follows the All; in making the preparations for the sacrifice, for which he consecrates himself, he creates the All out of himself.<sup>1</sup> Equally endowed with magic power and equally significant is everything which is connected with the sacrifice, the sacrificial utensils no less than the prayers and formulae, the verses and their metres, the chants, and their melodies. Every single sacrificial act is treated with the greatest circumstantiality: enormous importance is attached to the most trivial circumstances, to the least details. Whether an action is to be performed to the left or to the right, whether a pot is to be put in this or in that spot on the place of sacrifice, whether a blade of grass is to be laid down with the point to the north or to the north-east, whether the priest steps in front of the fire or behind it, in which direction he must have his face turned, into how many parts the sacrificial cake is to be divided, whether the ghee is to be poured into the northern or the southern half or into the centre of the fire, at which instant the repetition of a certain spell, the singing of a certain song has to take place,<sup>2</sup>—these are questions upon which generations of masters of the art of sacrifice have meditated, and which are treated in the most searching manner in the Brāhmaṇas. Upon the correct knowledge of all these details does the weal and woe of the sacrificer depend.

<sup>1</sup> *Sat.*, XIV, 8, 2, 1. III, 6, 3, 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Eggeling* (SBE., Vol. 12, p. X) recalls the fact that among the Ancient Romans, too, the *Pontifices* gained their power and influence through being the only people who understood all the details of the sacrificial ceremonial, which details, though small, had yet been declared tremendously important. It happened in Ancient Rome, that a sacrifice had to be repeated thirty times, because some little mistake had been made at one of the ceremonies; and in Ancient Rome, too, a ceremony was regarded as null and void, if a word was mispronounced or an act was not performed quite correctly, or if the music did not cease playing at the right moment. Cf. Marquardt and Mommsen, *Handbuch der römischen Altertümer*, VI, pp. 172, 174, 213.

“ Such, indeed, are the wilds and ravines of sacrifice, and they (take) hundreds upon hundreds of days’ carriage-drives; and if any venture into them without knowledge, then hunger or thirst, evildoers and fiends harass them, even as fiends would harass foolish men wondering in a wild forest; but if those who know this do so, they pass from one deity to another, as from one stream into another, and from one safe place to another, and obtain well-being, the world of heaven.”<sup>1</sup>

But ‘ those who know ’, the guides through the wilderness of sacrificial art, are the priests, and it is no wonder that the claims of the *priestly caste*—for of such a caste we must now speak, as the caste system is already fully developed—in the Brāhmaṇas (as already in some parts of the *Atharvaveda*) exceed all bounds. Now the Brahmans are frequently declared to be gods. “ Yes, they are the very gods, the Brahmans.”<sup>2</sup> One Brāhmaṇa states plainly enough :

“ Two kinds of gods there are, indeed, namely the gods are the gods, and the learned and studying.<sup>3</sup> Brahmans are the human gods. Between these two is the sacrifice divided; the sacrificial gifts are for the gods, the presents (Dakṣiṇās) for the human gods, the learned and studying Brahmans: by means of sacrificial gifts he pleases the gods, by presents he pleases the human gods, the learned studying Brahmans: these two kinds of gods transfer him, when they are satisfied, into the blessedness of heaven.”<sup>4</sup>

Four duties has the Brahman: Brahmanic descent, corresponding conduct, fame (attained through erudition) and ‘ ripening of the people ’ (*i.e.*, offering of sacrifices, by means of which people are made ripe for the Beyond). But the ‘ ripened ’ people also have four duties towards the Brahmans: They must show them honour, give them presents, may not oppress and not kill them. The property of a Brahman may under no circumstances be touched by the king; and if a king gives his whole country with all that is in it, to the priests as a sacrificial fee

<sup>1</sup> *Sat.*, XII, 2, 3, 12. Translated by J. Eggeling, SBE., Vol. 44, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā*, I, 7, 3, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Literally:—“who have heard and who repeat (recite what they have heard).”

<sup>4</sup> *Sat.*, II, 2, 2, 6; IV, 3, 4, 4.

(dakṣiṇā), then it is always understood that the property of Brahmans is excepted. A king can certainly oppress a Brahman, but if he does so, evil will befall him. At the consecration of a king the priest says "this man, ye people, is your king; Soma is the king of us Brahmans," to which the *Satapatha-Brahmana* observes: "By this formula he makes the whole nation as food for the king;<sup>1</sup> the Brahman alone he excepts; therefore the Brahman must not be utilised as food; for he has Soma as his king."<sup>2</sup> Only the murder of a Brahman is real murder. In a quarrel between a Brahman and a non-Brahman the judge must always decide in favour of the Brahman, for the Brahman may not be contradicted.<sup>3</sup> Everything which for some reason or another is ~~taboo~~, which one may not touch, and cannot use otherwise, as, for example, the stone and earthenware vessels of a deceased person or a cow (intended for the Agnihotra milk) which becomes stubborn or ill, must be given to the Brahman, especially the remains of sacrifices and food which are taboo for others, for 'nothing injures the stomach of a Brahman'.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, at last, the conclusion is arrived at, that the Brahman is no longer a 'human god' *by the side* of the heavenly gods, but that he raises himself *above* the gods. Already in the *Satapatha-Brahmana*<sup>5</sup> it is said: "The Brahman descended from a Ṛṣi indeed is all deities," i.e., in him all deities are incorporated. This presumption on the part of the priests, the beginnings of which we meet with in the Brāhmaṇas, is not only of the greatest interest for the history of culture as an example of priestly arrogance, but it is also the precursor of a phenomenon which we can trace through the whole of Indian antiquity, and which, I think, is deeply rooted in the life of the Indo-European mind. While, for instance, the Hebrew poet says: "What is

<sup>1</sup> I.e., the king lives by the people, who have to pay him taxes.

<sup>2</sup> *Sat.*, XI, 5, 7, 1; XIII, 5, 4, 24; XIII, 1, 5, 4; V, 4, 2, 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Sat.*, XIII, 3, 5, 3; *Taittiriya-Saṃhitā*, II, 5, 11, 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Taittiriya-Saṃhitā*, II, 6, 8, 7. Cf. Goethe, *Faust*:

"The Church has a good digestion,

Has eaten up whole lands

And yet never over-eaten herself."

<sup>5</sup> XII, 4, 4, 6. Later it is said in the law-book of Manu: 'A Brahman, be he learned or unlearned, is a great deity', and immediately afterwards, 'The Brahman is the highest deity.' *Manu*, IX, 317, 319.

man, that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" and adds 'Man is like unto nothingness,' a *Greek* poet uttered the great saying: "There is much that is powerful, but the most powerful is man." And a *German* poet—the same who created the super-man <sup>1</sup> Faust, who knocks violently at the gates of the spirit-world—has sung the song of Prometheus, who calls to the gods:

"I know nothing poorer  
Under the sun, than ye, O gods!"

And in India we see how, already in the Brāhmaṇas, the priest exalts himself over the gods through the *sacrifice*; in the epics we read countless stories of ascetics who, through ~~asceticism~~ attain to such ascendancy that the gods tremble upon their thrones. In Buddhism, however, the divine beings, with Indra the prince of gods, have fully dwindled into quite insignificant beings, who differ from ordinary mortals only in that they are somewhat better situated, and even that only so long as they remain devout Buddhists; and infinitely high above these gods stands not only the Buddha himself, but every man who, through *love for all beings* and through renunciation of the world, has become an Arhat or saint.<sup>2</sup>

Thus already in the Brāhmaṇas the way is prepared for that great movement to which Buddhism owes its origin: for it cannot be questioned that the old and genuine Brāhmaṇas belong to the Pre-Buddhist period. While in the Brāhmaṇas not the least trace is shown of any acquaintance with Buddhism,<sup>3</sup> the Buddhist texts pre-suppose the existence of a Brāhmaṇa literature. We can, therefore, say upon good grounds that the centuries in which the Liturgical Samhitās and the Brāhmaṇas originated, must fall into the period *after* the conclusion of the hymn-composition and the *Rgveda-Samhitā* and *before* the appearance of Buddhism.

<sup>1</sup> "What awful horror seizes thee, O Super-man!"

<sup>2</sup> See A. Weber, SBA., 1897, 1, 594, ff.

<sup>3</sup> It is significant that, in the list of human sacrifices in the *Vājasaneyi-Samhitā*, XXX (cf. above, pp. 174 f.) there is no mention of either monks or nuns, or of Buddhists at all. And yet this list is probably later than the oldest Brāhmaṇas.



As regards the actual contents of these works, a few examples will suffice to give the reader an idea. The Indians themselves usually arrange the contents of the Brāhmaṇas in two principal categories, which they call *Vidhi* and *Arthavāda*. *Vidhi* means 'rule, precept', *Arthavāda* 'explanation of meaning'. For the Brāhmaṇas first give rules for the performance of the single ceremonies, and to these the interpretations and explanations of the purpose and meaning of the sacrificial acts and prayers are afterwards attached. Thus, for example, the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa* begins with the precepts upon the vow of abstinence, which the sacrificer has to make on the day before the new-moon and full-moon sacrifice. There we read :

" He who is about to enter on the vow, touches water, whilst standing between the Ahavaniya and Gārhapatya fires, with his face turned towards east. The reason why he touches water is, that man is (sacrificially) impure on account of his speaking untruth; and because by that act an internal purification (is effected),—for water is indeed (sacrificially) pure. 'After becoming sacrificially pure, I will enter on the vow,' thus (he thinks); for water is indeed purifying. 'Having become purified through the purifying one, I will enter on the vow,' thus (he thinks, and) this is the reason why he touches water."<sup>1</sup>

To such simple explanations there are often attached discussions of the views of various teachers upon some question of ritual. Thus here the controversy is raised whether, at the making of the vow in question, one should fast or not, and it is said :

" Now then of the eating (or) fasting. And on this point Āshātha Sāvayasa, on the one hand, was of opinion that the vow consisted in fasting. For assuredly (he argued), the gods see through the mind of man; they know that, when he enters on this vow he means to sacrifice to them next morning. Therefore, all the gods betake themselves to his house, and abide by (him or the fires, upa-vas) in his house: whence this (day) is called upa-vasatha. [7]

Now, as it would even be unbecoming for him to take food, before men (who are staying with him as his guests)<sup>2</sup> have eaten; how much

<sup>1</sup> *Sat.* I, 1, 1, 1. Translated by J. Eggeling, SBE., Vol. 12, pp. 2 f.

<sup>2</sup> The sentences in brackets have been completed from the context. It is impossible to render the origin accurately in English without such completions. The

more would it be so, if he were to take food before the gods (who are staying with him) have eaten: let him therefore take no food at all. [8]

Yājñavalkya, on the other hand, said: "If he does not eat, he thereby becomes a sacrificer to the Fathers;<sup>1</sup> and if he does eat, he eats before the gods have eaten: let him, therefore, eat what, when eaten, counts as not eaten." For that of which no offering is made, even though it is eaten, is considered as not eaten. When he, therefore, eats, he does not become a sacrificer to the Fathers; and by eating of that of which no offering is made, he does not eat before the gods have eaten. [9]

Let him, therefore, eat only what grows in the forest, be it forest plants or the fruit of trees."<sup>2</sup>

*Etymologies*, such as that of *Upavasatha* in the above-quoted place, are exceedingly frequent in the Brāhmaṇas. Moreover, it is regarded as a special advantage if an etymology is not quite accurate, for "the gods love that which is hidden." Thus, for instance, the name of the god *Indra* is derived from *indh*, 'to kindle', and it is said: he is, therefore, actually named *Indha*, and he is called 'Indra' only because the gods love what is concealed. Or the word '*ulūkhala*', which means 'mortar', is derived from *uru karat*, 'it shall make wide', and '*ulūkhala*' is declared to be a mystical designation for '*urukara*'." Like the etymologizing, *identifying* and *symbolizing* play an even greater part in the Brāhmaṇas than in the *Yajurveda-Saṃhitās*:<sup>4</sup> the most dissimilar things being put together and associated with one another. On every page of the Brāhmaṇas we find explanations like the following:

"He now strews sacrificial grass all round (the fires), and fetches the utensils, taking two at a time, *viz.*, the winnowing basket and the Agnihotra ladle, the wooden sword and the potsherds, the wedge and the black antelope skin, the mortar and the pestle, the large and the small mill-stones. These are ten in number; for of ten syllables consists the Virāj (metre), and radiant (virāj) also is the sacrifice; so that he thereby

Brāhmaṇas are not *written for readers*, but *spoken to hearers*, hence much is omitted which the speaker can express by means of emphasizing certain words, manual gestures, and so on.

<sup>1</sup> Because fasting is ordained for sacrifices to the fathers.

<sup>2</sup> *Sat.* I, 1, 1, 7-10. Translated by J. Eggeling, SBE., Vol. 12, pp. 4 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Sat.* VI, 1, 1, 2; VII, 8, 1, 22, *cf.* above, p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 160. On identifications in the Brāhmaṇas, see Oldenberg, *Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft*, pp. 110 ff.

makes the sacrifice resemble the Virāj. The reason why he takes two at a time is, because a pair means strength; for when two undertake anything, there is strength in it. Moreover, a pair represents a productive copulation, so that a productive copulation (of those respective objects) is thereby effected''<sup>1</sup>

" Now the sacrifice is the man. The sacrifice is the man<sup>2</sup> for the reason that the man spreads (performs) it; and that in being spread it is made of exactly the same extent as the man:<sup>3</sup> this is the reason why the sacrifice is the man. [1]

The juhū<sup>4</sup> (spoon) further belongs to that (man-shaped sacrifice and so does the upabhr̥t<sup>5</sup>; and the dhruvā<sup>6</sup>; represents its trunk. Now it is from the trunk that all these limbs proceed, and for this reason the entire sacrifice proceeds from the dhruvā. [2]

The dipping-spoon<sup>4</sup> (sruva, masc.) is no other than the breath. This breath passes through (or, goes to) all the limbs, and for that reason the dipping-spoon goes to all the offering-spoons (sruc, fem.). [3]

That juhū further is to him<sup>5</sup> no other than yonder sky, and the upabhr̥t this atmosphere, and the dhruvā this same (earth). Now it is from this (earth) that all the worlds originate: and from the dhruvā, therefore, the whole sacrifice proceeds. [4]

The dipping-spoon then is no other than that blowing one (the wind); it is this that sweeps across all these worlds: and for that reason the sruva goes to all the offering-spoons." <sup>6</sup> [5]

In countless places in the Brāhmaṇas the *sacrifice* is identified with the god *Viṣṇu* and equally frequently with the creator *Prajāpati*. But the *year* too, is identified with *Prajāpati* countless times, while on the other hand *Agni*, as the fire-altar, is also regarded as the year, because the building of the fire-altar takes a whole year. Thus we read: "Agni is the year, and the year is these worlds", and immediately afterwards: "Agni is *Prajāpati*, and *Prajāpati* is the year." Or, "Prajā-

<sup>1</sup> *Sat.* I, 1, 1, 22. Translated by J. Eggeling, SBE., Vol. 12, pp. 10 f.

<sup>2</sup> Because, in measuring the sacrificial place, such measurements as 'man's length', 'arm's length', 'span' and so on, are employed.

<sup>3</sup> Names of different sacrificial spoons.

<sup>4</sup> With this spoon (Sruva) the ghee is taken out of the ghee-pot and poured into the sacrificial spoons with which it is served.

<sup>5</sup> 'He' means *Puruṣa*, 'man'. But *Puruṣa* also means 'spirit' and designates the 'Great Spirit' too, which is one with *Prajāpati*, the creator of the universe. Hence, the sacrifice is not only identified with man (the sacrificer) but also with the Universal Spirit and *Prajāpati*. Cf. above, p. 184, note 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Sat.* I, 3, 2, 1-5. Translated by J. Eggeling, SBE., Vol. 12, p. 78 f.

pati, indeed, is the sacrifice and the year, the new moon night is its gate, and the moon is the bolt of the gate." <sup>1</sup> A prominent part is here played by the symbolism of figures. Thus we read, for example :

" With *four* (verses) he takes (some of the ashes); he thereby supplies him (Agni) with *four-footed* animals; and animals being food, it is with food he thus supplies him. With *three* (verses) he takes (the ashes) down (to the water),—that makes *seven*, for of seven layers consists the fire-altar, seven seasons are a year, and the year is Agni: as great as Agni is, as great as his measure, so great does this become." <sup>2</sup>

Here and there these barren explanations gain a little interest through the fact that they throw some light upon the moral views and social conditions of the period to which the Brāhmaṇas belong. Thus, for example, at the soma-sacrifice one of the soma-libations is dedicated to Agni Patnīvat, i.e. 'Agni accompanied by his wives'.<sup>3</sup> This libation differs in certain details from other soma-gifts, and these deviations in the offering of the same are explained by reference to the weakness and helplessness of the female sex :

" With the remains of ghee left over in the sacrificial spoon he mixes (the soma). Other soma-libations he makes strong, by mixing them, but he weakens this one; for ghee is indeed a thunderbolt, and with the thunderbolt, the ghee, did the gods beat and weaken their wives; and thus beaten and weakened they had no right whatever either to their own bodies or to an heritage. And likewise he now beats and weakens the wives with the thunderbolt, the ghee, and thus beaten and weakened, the wives have no right whatever either to their own bodies or to an heritage." (Sat. IV, 4, 2, 18).

This, then, would be a ritual argument for the bondage of woman.<sup>4</sup> In another place the relationship of the wife to

<sup>1</sup> Sat. VIII, 2, 1, 17-18; XI, 1, 1, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Sat. VI, 8, 2, 7. Translated by J. Eggeling, SBE., Vol. 41, p. 295.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. above, p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> We also read in the Brāhmaṇas such sentences as : " Verily, the sacrifice is right and truth, woman is something wrong " (Maitrāyaṇya-Saṃhitā, 1, 10, 11), " Nirṛti (i.e. Evil personified) is woman." (Maitr. 1, 10, 16), " Woman, the Śūdra, the dog, and the blackbird (the crow) are something wrong." (Sat. 14, 1, 1, 81), etc. See Lévi.

the husband appears in a slightly pleasanter light. Namely, at the Vājapeya-sacrifice, the following ceremony occurs. A ladder is leaned against the sacrificial stake, and sacrificer, with his wife, ascends it :

“ When he is about to ascend, he addresses his wife in the following words: ‘ Wife, let us ascend to heaven,’ and the wife answers: ‘ Yes, let us ascend.’ The reason why he addresses his wife thus is this: She the wife, is indeed his own half; therefore, as long as he has no wife, so long he does not propagate his species, so long he is no complete individual; but when he has a wife, then he propagates his species, then he is complete. ‘ As a complete individual will I go this way (to heaven),’ he thinks; therefore he addresses his wife in this manner.” (*Sat.* V. 2, 1, 10).

The place of sacrifice or the altar (*Vedi*, fem.) is represented in the symbolism of the *Brāhmaṇas* as a woman. The following rule for the erection of the altar gives us information upon the ancient ideal of feminine beauty :

“ It (the altar) should be broader on the west side, contracted in the middle, and broad again on the east side; for thus shaped they praise a woman: ‘ broad about the hips, somewhat narrower between the shoulders, and contracted in the middle (or, about the waist).’ Thereby he makes it (the altar) pleasing to the gods.”<sup>1</sup>

A glaring light is thrown upon the sexual morality of that period by a brutal sacrificial custom which occurs at one of the sacrifices of the seasons, and is described as follows :

“ Thereupon the *Pratiprasthātṛ*<sup>2</sup> returns (to where the sacrificer’s wife is seated). When he is about to lead the wife away,<sup>3</sup> he asks her, ‘ With whom holdest thou intercourse?’ Now when a woman who belongs to one (man) carries on intercourse with another, she undoubtedly commits a (sin) against *Varuṇa*. He, therefore, thus asks her, lest she should sacrifice with a secret pang in her mind; for when confessed the sin becomes less, since it becomes truth; this is why he thus asks her. And whatever (connection) she confesses not, that indeed will turn out injurious to her relatives.”<sup>4</sup>

*La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brāhmaṇas*, pp. 156 ff.; Oldenberg, *Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft*, pp. 44 f.; and Winternitz, *Die Frau in den indischen Religionen*, I, pp. 4 f., 10 ff., 48.

<sup>1</sup> *Sat.* I, 2, 5, 16. Translated by J. Eggeling, SBE., Vol. 12, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> One of the priests, an assistant of the *adhvaryu*.

<sup>3</sup> Namely, to the altar, where she is to offer a gift to *Varuṇa*.

<sup>4</sup> *Sat.* II, 5, 2, 20. Translated by J. Eggeling, SBE., Vol. 12, pp. 306 f.

This, by the way, is one of the few places in the Brāhmaṇas where morality is thought of. It is only very occasionally that we come across moral reflections, as for instance, when the Asuras defeated the gods by falsehood, but the gods gained the ascendancy in the end, we are told that in like manner when men speak the truth, they may suffer adversity at first, but will prosper ultimately, while though the liars may have success for a time, they will surely perish in the end.<sup>1</sup> Generally speaking, however, it is very characteristic of these texts that there is hardly any mention of morality in them at all. The Brāhmaṇas are a splendid proof of the fact that an enormous amount of religion can be connected with infinitely little morality. Religious acts, sacrifices and ceremonies, are the one and only subject of all these extensive works, but morality is a thing with which these works have nothing to do.<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, sacrificial acts are not only performed in order that the gods may fulfil the very materialistic wishes of the sacrificer, but also very frequently in order to injure an enemy. Indeed, the Brāhmaṇas give directions for the priests, how, by means of the sacrifice, they can injure the sacrificer himself by whom they are employed, if, for instance, he does not give them enough presents. They need only perform the prescribed ceremonies in reverse order, or employ spells at the wrong place, and the fate of the sacrificer is sealed.

But enough of this intricate science of sacrifice which forms the chief contents of the Brāhmaṇas. Fortunately, one of the component parts of the Arthavāda or the 'explanation of meaning', consists of the so-called *Itihāsas*, *Ākhyānas* and *Purāṇas*, i.e. narratives, myths and legends, which are narrated in order to explain the reason for some ritual act or other. As

<sup>1</sup> *Sat.* IX, 5, 1, 16 f. Oldenberg (*Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft*, pp. 19 ff., 124 ff., 184 ff.) has taken great pains to collect all that can be found on ethical ideas in the Brāhmaṇas. It does not amount to much.

<sup>2</sup> "Morals have found no place in this system: the sacrifice which regulates the relationship of man with the gods is a mechanical operation which acts by its innermost energy; hidden in the bosom of nature, it only emerges under the magic action of the priest." "It is indeed difficult to conceive of anything more brutal or more material than the theology of the Brāhmaṇas; the notions, which custom has slowly refined and clothed with a moral aspect, surprise us by their savage realism." 'Sylvain' Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice*, p. 9; cf. 164 ff.

in the Talmud, to which the Brāhmaṇas have some similarity, the blooming garden of the Hagada (so beautifully described in song by Heine) stands beside the theological jugglery of the Halacha, so also in the Brāhmaṇas the desert of desolate theological speculation is now and then pleasantly relieved by an oasis, in which the flower of poetry, a poetical narrative or a deeply thoughtful legend of the creation, blossoms.

The very old myth, already known to the singers of the *Rgveda*, of Purūravas and Urvaśī, narrated in the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>1</sup> is such an oasis in the desert. It is there related how the nymph (Apsaras) Urvaśī loved the king Purūravas, how she stated her conditions when she became his wife, and how the Gandharvas caused him to violate one of these conditions. Then she eluded him, and Purūravas, wailing and lamenting, wandered throughout the whole of Kurukṣetra until he came to a lotus-pond, where nymphs were swimming about in the form of swans. Among them was Urvaśī and there ensued the dialogue which is already known to us from the dialogue verses of the *Rgveda*.

"Then her heart took pity on him. She said, 'Come here the last night of the year from now: then shalt thou lie with me for one night, and then this son of thine,<sup>2</sup> will have been born.' He came there on the last night of the year, and lo, there stood a golden palace! They then said to him only this (word), 'Euter!' and then they bade her go to him.

She then said, 'To-morrow morning the Gandharvas will grant thee a boon, and thou must make thy choice.' He said, 'Choose thou for me!' She replied, 'Say, "Let me be one of yourselves"!' In the morning the Gandharvas granted him a boon; and he said, 'Let me be one of yourselves'!'<sup>3</sup>

Thereupon, the Gandharvas taught him a particular form of fire-sacrifice, through which a mortal becomes changed into a Gandharva. To the description of this sacrifice we owe the

<sup>1</sup> XI, 5, 1. Translated by Eggeling, SBE., Vol. 44, pp. 68 ff., German translation by K. Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, I, 244 ff. See above, pp. 90 f.

<sup>2</sup> Literally: "This thy son here." One of the many expressions which are only explicable in the oral presentation. Similarly, 'this here' in the Brāhmaṇas often means 'earth', 'that, yonder' means 'sky,' and so on.

<sup>3</sup> Translated by J. Eggeling, SBE., Vol. 44, pp. 72 f.

insertion in the Brāhmaṇa of the old wonder-tale from which not even the doctors of the sacrificial art could strip all the magic of poetry.

In the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa* we also find the Indian legend of the flood, which in all probability is derived from a Semitic source, in its oldest form :

“ In the morning they brought to Manu water for washing just as now also they (are wont to) bring (water) for washing the hands. When he was washing himself, a fish came into his hands. [1]

It spake to him the word, ‘ Rear me, I will save thee ! ’ ‘ Wherefrom wilt thou save me ? ’ ‘ A flood will carry away all these creatures : from that I will save thee ! ’ ‘ How am I to rear thee ? ’ [2]

It said, ‘ As long as we are small, there is great destruction for us : fish devours fish. Thou wilt first keep me in a jar. When I outgrow that, thou wilt dig a pit and keep me in it. When I outgrow that, thou wilt take me down to the sea, for then I shall be beyond destruction. ’ [3]

It soon became a jhasha (a large fish); for that grows largest (of all fish). Thereupon it said, ‘ In such and such a year that flood will come. Thou shalt then attend to me (i.e. to my advice) by preparing a ship; and when the flood has risen thou shalt enter into the ship, and I will save thee from it. ’ [4]

After he had reared it in this way, he took it down to the sea. And in the same year which the fish had indicated to him, he attended to (the advice of the fish) by preparing a ship; and when the flood had risen, he entered into the ship. The fish then swam up to him, and to its horn he tied the rope of the ship, and by that means he passed swiftly up to yonder northern mountain. [5]

It then said, ‘ I have saved thee. Fasten the ship to a tree; but let not the water cut thee off, whilst thou art on the mountain. As the water subsides, thou mayest gradually descend ! ’ Accordingly, he gradually descended, and hence that (slope) of the northern mountain is called ‘ Manu’s descent ’. The flood then swept away all these creatures, and Manu alone remained here.<sup>1</sup>

Thus far goes the old legend which must have related further how the human race was renewed through Manu. The Brāhmaṇa, however, related that Manu, in order to obtain descendants, offered a sacrifice; out of this sacrifice arose a woman, and through her the human race was propagated. This

<sup>1</sup> *Sat.*, I, 8, 1. Translated by Eggeling, SBE., Vol. 12, pp. 216 ff.



daughter of Manu is called Idā—and the narrative is inserted only to explain the significance of a sacrificial gift designated by the name of Idā.

These narratives are also of importance to us as the oldest examples of Indian narrative prose which we possess. It has already been mentioned that this prose of the oldest epic compositions frequently alternates with verses. But while in the story of Purūravas and Urvaśī the verses appear not only in the R̥gveda-collection, but in language and metre belong to the oldest Vedic compositions too, we find in the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* an Ākhyāna in which the Gāthās or verses scattered among the prose approach the epic in language as well as in metre. This is the legend of Śunaḥśepa,<sup>1</sup> interesting in more ways than one. It begins as follows :

“ Hariścandra, son of Vedhas, a king of the race of the Ikṣvākus, was childless. He had a hundred wives, but by none of them did he have a son. Once Parvata and Nārada<sup>2</sup> visited him, and he asked Nārada :

‘ As all men desire a son, wise men as well as fools,  
Tell me, O Nārada, what a man gains by having a son.’

Asked thus in one verse, he replied with ten :

‘ The father, who looks upon the face of his son, born  
living unto him,  
Discharges his debt in him, attains to immortality  
through him.’<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, VII, 13-18, English translation by Max Müller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, 2nd ed., London, 1860, pp. 408 ff., by M. Haug, and by A. B. Keith in their respective translations of the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*. German translation by R. Roth, *Ind. Stud.*, I, 457 ff. See also Roth, *Ind. Stud.*, 2, 112 ff.; A. Weber, *SBA.*, 1891, pp. 776 ff.; Keith, *HOS.*, Vol. 25, pp. 61 ff.; Charpentier, *Die Suparṇasage*, pp. 58 f. The story is called an ‘Ākhyāna’ in the text itself.

<sup>2</sup> Two Ṛṣis or saints, who dwell now in heaven, now on earth, and often serve the gods as messengers.

<sup>3</sup> The best explanation of this verse is given in two Brāhmaṇa passages, *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā*, VI, 3, 10, 5 : “From the moment of his birth the Brāhmaṇ is burdened with three debts : to the Ṛṣis he owes the vow of learning the Veda, to the gods he owes the sacrifice and to the Fathers, offspring; he who begets a son, offers sacrifices and keeps the vow of learning the Veda, is freed from his debts”; and *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa* I, 5, 5, 6 : “In descendants dost thou propagate thy race; that, O mortal, is thy immortality.” Already in the *R̥gveda* V, 4, 10, it is said : “May I, O Agni, attain to immortality through descendants!”

Of all the joys there are for creatures on this earth,  
In fire, and in water, greatest is the father's in his son.  
Always through the son have fathers conquered darkness;  
He himself is again newly-born, the son is to him a rescuing boat.

What avails the dirt, and what the goat-skin, what the beard,  
and what ascetism!<sup>1</sup>  
Brahmans, desire a son for yourselves: in him ye have the  
blameless world of heaven.

Food is life, clothing is protection and gold ornaments are beauty;  
Marriage means cattle;<sup>2</sup> a friend<sup>3</sup> is the wife, a sorrow the  
daughter,<sup>4</sup>  
Light in the highest regions of heaven is the son to his father.

The husband entereth his wife, becomes the embryo in her  
womb,  
And is by her brought forth again, in the tenth moon,  
as a new man.' "

<sup>5</sup> After he had uttered the verses, he said to him! 'Approach King Varuṇa and say: 'May a son be born to me; I will sacrifice him to thee.' 'So be it,' he said, and went up to King Varuṇa, praying: 'May a son be born to me; I will sacrifice him to thee.' 'So be it' (said Varuṇa). Then a son was born to him, Rohita by name. And Varuṇa said to him: 'Now a son has been born to thee; sacrifice him to me.' He, however, said: "Not until an animal is over ten days old is it suitable for sacrifice. Let him become over ten days old; then I will sacrifice him to thee.' 'So be it.' And he became over ten days old. The former said to him: 'Now he has become over ten days old; sacrifice him to me.' But the latter said: 'Not until an animal has got teeth is it suitable for sacrifice. Let him get teeth; then I will sacrifice him to thee.' 'So be it.'

<sup>1</sup> The verse is directed against the forest-hermits and ascetics.

<sup>2</sup> Because the purchase price for daughters was, among the ancient Indians as among the ancient Greeks, paid in cows. Cf. the 'oxen-bringing maidens' in Homer.

<sup>3</sup> At the marriage, in Ancient India, the bride and bridegroom took seven steps together, whereupon the bridegroom said: "At the seventh step become a friend (maṇḍa)."

<sup>4</sup> Female infanticide and child marriage have been the diabolical consequences of the view that the birth of a daughter is a calamity. See Winternitz, *Die Frau in den indischen Religionen*, I, pp. 21 f. The view that a daughter is 'a misery' is, however, spread all over the world.

<sup>5</sup> Here follow four verses more, in which the same ideas are varied.

In a similar manner Hariścandra puts the god Varuṇa off until Rohita has attained the age of manhood. Then at last he desires to sacrifice him, but Rohita escapes into the forest, where he wanders about for a year. Thereupon, Hariścandra is attacked by dropsy, the disease sent by Varuṇa as a punishment. Rohita hears of it and desires to return, but Indra confronts him in the form of a Brahman, extols the fortune of the wanderer and advises him to continue wandering on. A second, a third, a fourth, a fifth year does the youth wander about in the forest, again and again he wishes to return, and again and again Indra confronts him and urges him to further wanderings. As he was wandering about in the forest the sixth year, he met the Ṛṣi Ajīgarta, ~~who~~ tortured by hunger, was wandering about in the forest. The latter had three sons, Sunahpuccha, Sunahśepa, Sunolāṅgūla<sup>1</sup> by name, Rohita offers him a hundred cows for one of his sons, in order to ransom himself through him, and, as the father does not wish to part with the eldest and the mother does not wish to part with the youngest son, receives the middle one, Sunahśepa. With the latter Rohita goes to his father. And as Varuṇa agrees that Sunahśepa shall be sacrificed to him,—for “a Brahman is worth more than a warrior,” said Varuṇa,—he is to be offered in the place of the sacrificial animal at the sacrifice of the consecration of the king (Rājasūya). Everything is prepared for the sacrifice, but no one is found who will undertake the binding of the sacrificial victim. Then said Ajīgarta, “Give me a second hundred, and I will bind him.” And for a second hundred cows he binds his son Sunahśepa to the sacrificial stake; for a third hundred, however, he offers to slay him. The further hundred cows are given to him, and with a sharpened knife, he steps towards his son. Then thought the latter: “They want to slaughter me as though I were no human being; well, I will take refuge with the gods.” And he praised in turn all the most prominent gods of the Vedic pantheon in a number of hymns which are found in our

<sup>1</sup> These strange names, which mean ‘dog’s hinder part’, ‘dog’s puzzle,’ and ‘dog’s tail,’ are probably chosen for the purpose of making the Ṛṣi Ajīgarta—the name means “who has nothing to eat”—appear in the worst possible light. Nevertheless, these names also prove the more popular than priestly character of the narrative.

*R̥gveda-Saṃhitā*. But when, finally, he glorified Uṣas, the Dawn, in three verses, one fetter after another fell from him, and the dropsical stomach of Hariścandra became smaller, and with the last verse he was free of his fetters and Hariścandra was well. Thereupon, the priests received him into the sacrificial gathering, and Sunahśepa saw (by intuition) a particular kind of soma sacrifice. Viśvāmitra, however, the ṛṣi about whom there are so many legends, who occupied the position of hotar at the sacrifice of Hariścandra, adopted Sunahśepa as his son, and neglecting his own hundred sons, solemnly appointed him as his heir. Finally it is said :

“ That is the tale (ākhyāna) of Sunahśepa which contains over a hundred *R̥gveda*-verses and also stanzas.<sup>1</sup> This the hotar relates to the king, after he has been sprinkled with holy water at the *R̥ajasūya*. Seated on a golden cushion he tells the story. Seated on a golden cushion (the Adhvaryu) gives the responses. Gold, indeed, signifies glory. Thereby he causes his glory to increase. ‘ Om ’ is the response to a *R̥g*-verse, ‘ yes ’ that to a *Gāthā*.<sup>2</sup> For ‘ Om ’ is divine, and ‘ yes ’ is human. In this way he releases him through the divine and the human word from misfortune and sin. Therefore a king who desires to be victorious, even though he be no sacrificer, may have the Sunahśepa legend related to him; then not the least sin remains attached to him. A thousand cows shall he give to the narrator, a hundred to the priest who makes the responses, and to each of the two the golden cushions upon which he sat; moreover, also a silver chariot harnessed with mules is due to the hotar. Those, too, who desire a son, shall cause the story to be related to them; then they will assuredly obtain a son.”

But if this Sunahśepa legend was already a time-honoured ancient myth for the editors or compilers of the *Aitareya-Brahmana*, and the narration of it at the consecration of the king<sup>3</sup> actually formed part of the ritual, how old must the

<sup>1</sup> “ *Gāthās*,” epic verses, as those quoted above.

<sup>2</sup> i.e., always when the Hotar recites a *R̥g*-verse, the Adhvaryu cries at the conclusion of it : ‘ Om ; ’ when he has recited an epic verse, he cries ‘ Yes ’. Cf. above, p. 162, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> As an ākhyāna belonging to the *R̥ajasūya* it is also related in the *Sāṅkhāyana-Srautasūtra*, 15, 17 ff. In the same *Srautasūtra*, 16, 11, 1-3, it is mentioned as one of the ākhyānas to be told at the *Puruṣamedha*. It is also referred to in the *Srautasūtras* of *Kātyāyana*, *Apastamba*, and *Bandhāyana*. See Keith, *HOS.*, Vol. 25, pp. 20 f., 40 f., 61 f., 67.

legend itself be! It must be very old, also because in it is preserved the memory of human sacrifice, which must have been offered at the Rājasūya in pre-historic times, although nowhere else either in the Brāhmaṇas or in the ritual-manuals (Śrauta-sūtras) is there any mention of human sacrifices at the consecration of the king. Yet the Sunahṣepa legend is late in comparison with the *Rgveda*. For the hymns,<sup>1</sup> which, according to the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, Sunahṣepa is said to have "seen" are partly such as possibly a Ṛṣi Sunahṣepa might have composed as well as any other ṛṣi, although there is not the least matter contained in them which might relate to our legend; partly, however, they are hymns which are not at all fitting for the lips of the Sunahṣepa of the legend, as, for instance the song *Rgveda* 1, 29, with the refrain; "Let us hope, O generously-giving Indra, for a thousand shining oxen and horses," or which like *Rv.* 1, 24, even contain verses which cannot possibly have been composed by the Sunahṣepa of the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*. For it says here: "He whom Sunahṣepa invoked when he was seized, the king Varuṇa, may he deliver us!" and: "Sunahṣepa, indeed, when he was seized and bound to three stakes, invoked the Āditya." These are verses which must refer to another much older Sunahṣepa legend. If the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* places these hymns in the mouth of Sunahṣepa, then it can only be because the same tradition, in nowise reliable, which we have in our Anukramaṇīs<sup>2</sup> at the time of the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* already ascribed those hymns to a Ṛṣi Sunahṣepa. We have here again a proof of how much earlier the *Rgveda* hymns are, chronologically, than everything else which belongs to the Veda.

Unfortunately, few narratives have come down to us in such entirety in the Brāhmaṇas as that of Sunahṣepa. Mostly, the stories are prepared for the purpose which they are to serve, namely the explanation or justification of a sacrificial ceremony,

<sup>1</sup> Namely, *Rv.* I, 24-30 and IX, 8. The Gāthās of the Sunahṣepa-Akhyāna are, of course, much later than the verses of the *Rgveda*. Yet from the metre, it seems that they are older than the metrical portions of the Upaniṣads; see Keith, *HOS.*, Vol. 28, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 50 f. and below in the section on Exegetic Vedāṅgas.

and it is sometimes not easy to extract from them the nucleus of an old legend or an old myth. Moreover, by no means all the narratives which we find in the Brāhmaṇas are derived from old myths and legends, but they are often only invented for the explanation of some sacrificial ceremony. Sometimes, however, even these invented tales are not without interest. To explain, for instance, why, in the case of sacrificial gifts which are dedicated to Prajāpati, the prayers are only to be uttered in a low voice, the following pretty allegory is related :

“ Now a dispute once took place between Mind and Speech as to which was the better of the two. Both Mind and Speech said, ‘ I am excellent ! ’ [8]

Mind said, ‘ Surely I am better than thou, for thou dost not speak anything that is not understood by me ; and since ~~thou~~ art only an imitator of what is done by me and a follower in my wake, I am surely better than thou ! ’ [9]

Speech said, ‘ Surely I am better than thou, for what thou knowest, I make known, I communicate. ’ [10]

They went to appeal to Prajāpati for his decision. He, Prajāpati, decided in favour of Mind, saying (to Speech), ‘ Mind is indeed better than thou, for thou art an imitator of its deeds and a follower in its wake ; and inferior, surely, is he who imitates his better’s deeds and follows in his wake. ’ [11]

Then Speech (vāc, fem.) being thus gainsaid, was dismayed and mis-carried. She, Speech, then said to Prajāpati, ‘ May I never be thy oblation-bearer, I whom thou hast gainsaid ! ’ Hence whatever at the sacrifice is performed for Prajāpati, that is performed in a low voice ; for speech would not act as oblation-bearer for Prajāpati. ’ [12]

*Vāc*, speech, also forms the subject of many narratives, in which she is represented as the prototype of women. Thus we meet with her, for example, in the legend of the soma-theft, which frequently occurs in the Brāhmaṇas. The soma was in heaven, and Gāyatrī, in the form of a bird, fetched it down. But as she carried it away, it was stolen from her by a Gandharva. Now the gods took counsel together how they could get back the stolen soma.

" They said, ' The Gandharvas are fond of women : let us send Vâc (speech) to them, and she will return to us together with Soma.' They sent Vâc to them, and she returned to them together with Soma. [3]

The Gandharvas came after her and said, ' Soma (shall be) yours, and Vâc ours!' ' So be it!' said the gods; ' but if she would rather come hither, do not ye carry her off by force : let us woo her!' They accordingly wooed her. [4]

The Gandharvas recited the Vedas to her, saying, ' See how we know it, see how we know it!'<sup>1</sup> [5]

The gods then created the lute and sat playing and singing, saying, ' Thus we will sing to thee, thus we will amuse thee!' She turned to the gods; but, in truth, she turned to them vainly, since she turned away from those engaged in praising and praying, to dance and song. Wherefore even to this day women are given to vain things; for it was on this wise that Vâc turned thereto, and other women do as she did. And hence it is to him who dances and sings that they most readily take a fancy."<sup>2</sup>

Just as this little story is invented to *explain* an attribute of women, there are numerous narratives in the Brâhmanas which deal with the *origin* of some matter or some institution. Such legends of origin, to which also the creation-legends belong, the Indians designate as Purâṇas,<sup>3</sup> in order to distinguish them from the Itihâsas (or Âkhyânas), as the stories of gods and men are called. Among these narratives, too, there are such as were merely invented by Brâhmana theologians, while others date back to old, popular myths and legends, or at least are founded upon a tradition independent of the sacrificial science. Thus, the origin of the four castes is frequently related in the Brâhmanas. Already in one of the philosophical hymns of the *Rgveda*, the Puruṣasūkta,<sup>4</sup> it is reported how the Brahman arose out of the mouth, the warrior out of the arms, the Vaisya out of the thighs and the Sûdra out of the feet of the Puruṣa sacrificed by the gods. In the Brâhmanas it is Prajâpati who produced out of his mouth the Brahman together with the God Agni, out of his breast and

<sup>1</sup> As the Veda is the knowledge *par excellence*. See above, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Sat.*, III, 2, 4, 2-6. Translated by J. Eggeling, SBE., Vol. 26, p. 53. *cf. Sat.*, III, 2, 1, 13 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Purâṇa* means 'old', then 'old legend', 'old story', especially cosmogonic and cosmological myths. At a later period a peculiar class of works was designated as *Purâṇas*, with which we shall have to deal in a later section.

<sup>4</sup> X, 90, 12, *cf. above*, p. 153. Deussen, AGPh., I, 1, pp. 150 ff.

his two arms the warrior as well as Indra, out of the middle of his body the Vaiśya and the All-gods, but out of his feet the Sūdra. With the Sūdra no deity was created; therefore he is incapable for sacrifice. In consequence of this kind of origin the Brahman performs his work with his mouth, the warrior with his arms; the Vaiśya does not perish, however much he is "consumed," i.e., exploited, by priests and warriors, for he is created out of the middle of the body, where the reproductive power reposes; but of religious ceremonies, the Sūdra can perform only the foot-washing of members of the higher castes, for he arose out of the feet.<sup>1</sup> The following two suggestive tales of the creation of the night and of the winged mountains, found in the *Maitrāyaṇī-Saṃhitā*, are more pleasing.

"Yama had died. The gods tried to persuade Yama's wife Yamī to forget him. Whenever they asked her, she said: "Only to-day he has died." Then the gods said: "Thus she will indeed never forget him; we will create night!" For at that time there was only day and no night. The gods created night; then arose a morrow; thereupon she forgot him. Therefore people say: "Day and night indeed let sorrow be forgotten!" (*Maitr.* I, 5, 12.)

"The oldest children of Prajāpati were the hills, and they were winged. They flew away and settled down just where they wished. But at that time the earth still swayed to and fro. Then Indra cut off the wings of the hills and made the earth fast with them. But the wings became storm-clouds; therefore these always hover in the direction of the mountains." (*Maitr.* I, 10, 13.)<sup>2</sup>

The creation-legends are very numerous in the Brāhmaṇas. An example will show how metaphysical thought here unites with desultory explanations of sacrificial directions. The daily fire-sacrifice (Agnihotra)<sup>3</sup> consisting in the offering of a gift of milk to the fire every morning and every evening, is one of the most

<sup>1</sup> *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā*, VII, 1, 1, 4-6. *Tāṇḍya-Brāhmaṇa*, VI, 1, 6-11. Cf. Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, X, 7-10.

<sup>2</sup> Twin-sister of Yama. See above, pp. 92 ff.

<sup>3</sup> The myth of the winged hills is already known to the singers of the *Rgveda*, and is still a favourite subject with later poets. Cf. Pischel, *Vedische Studien*, I, 174.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 150.



important sacrifices. Upon the origin and significance of this sacrifice a *Brāhmaṇa*<sup>1</sup> has the following to say :

In the beginning only Prajāpati was here alone. He thought to himself: 'How can I obtain descendants?' He tortured himself and mortified himself.<sup>2</sup> Out of his mouth he produced Agni. And because he produced him out of his mouth, therefore Agni is a consumer of food. And truly, he who knows that Agni is a food-consumer, he himself becomes a consumer of food. Him, then, he produced first, *agre*, among the gods, and therefore he is called *Agni*, for the name Agni is really *Agri*.<sup>3</sup> Now thought Prajāpati to himself: 'This Agni I have produced as a food-consumer. But there is indeed no other food here than myself, would that he may not eat me up!' For at that time this earth was quite bare; there existed neither plants nor trees. About this Prajāpati was troubled. Hereupon Agni turned to him with open (mouth) and from (Prajāpati), because he was afraid his own greatness fled. But his own greatness was his speech, and his own greatness fled from him.' (It is then further related that Prajāpati desires a sacrifice for himself, and through rubbing his hands obtains an offering of butter or of milk, out of which the plants arise. As the result of a second offering of butter or of milk, there arise Sūrya, the sun, and Vāyu, the wind.) "And Prajāpati, in offering sacrifice, on the one hand propagated his species, and on the other hand also saved himself from Agni, from death, when the latter was about to consume him. And he who, knowing this, offers the fire-sacrifice, on the one hand propagates his species by means of descendants as Prajāpati did, and on the other hand saves himself from Agni, from death, when the latter is about to consume him. And when he dies, and he is laid upon the fire, he is born again out of the fire, the fire only consumes his body.<sup>4</sup> And as if he were born of his father and his mother, just

<sup>1</sup> *Sat.*, II, 2, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Most of the creation-legends in the *Brāhmaṇas* begin in the same way. As the magician must prepare himself for his magic, and the priest must prepare himself for the sacrifice, by means of self-torture and mortification, so Prajāpati, too, has to prepare himself in the same way for the great work of creation. From the root—*śram* 'to exert oneself', is derived the word *śramana* 'the ascetic' which later occurs frequently, particularly in the Buddhist literature. The word *Tapas* actually means 'heat', then 'ascetic fervour', then asceticism itself. "In fact, if by the designation *Tapas* the manifold forms of mortification are understood, then, especially in the earlier periods, the reference to heat as the vehicle of mortification stands in the foreground." (Oldenberg, *Religion des Vēda*, 2. Aufl., pp. 401 ff.) According to *Sat.*, X, 4, 4. 1 f., Prajāpati once mortified himself for a thousand years until, as a result of the 'heat' of the mortification, lights issued from his pores,—and these became the stars.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 177.

<sup>4</sup> One of the few places in the *Brāhmaṇas* where mention is made of life after death.

so is he born of the fire. He, however, who does not offer the fire-sacrifice, never again arises to new life. Therefore, one must of necessity offer the fire-sacrifice." (It is then further related very circumstantially how the gods Agni, Vāyu and Sūrya, brought forth by Prajāpati, themselves in their turn offer sacrifices, and how the cow was created.) "This cow, however, Agni, desired thinking: 'I would like to mate myself with her.' He united himself with her and poured forth his seed into her. This became milk. Therefore, the latter is cooked, while the cow is raw, for the milk is Agni's seed; and therefore, it is that milk, whether it is in a black cow or a red one, is always white and shining like fire, because it is Agni's seed. And therefore, it is warm already at the milking, for it is the seed of Agni."<sup>1</sup>

Just as these creation-legends usually begin by relating that Prajāpati 'torments and mortifies himself', so we often read also that, after the creation was accomplished, he is weak, exhausted and wearied, whereupon some sacrifice is described, through which strength had to be restored. On one occasion it is the gods who offer this sacrifice, on another occasion Agni alone shows this favour to Prajāpati, and on yet another occasion he regains his strength, 'after having sung hymns and tortured himself,' by creating the sacrificial animals and sacrificing them.<sup>2</sup> It is indeed remarkable that this world-creator Prajāpati, who really is the highest god in the Brāhmaṇas, has nothing lofty about him and often plays a rather pitiful part. Once he is actually even offered as a sacrifice himself by the gods!<sup>3</sup> In a legend which is referred to in several places, he is accused of incest, which he has committed with his daughter Dyaus (heaven) or Uṣas (dawn). In order to punish him for this sin, the gods, out of their most frightful forms, formed the god Rudra. The latter pierced Prajāpati with his arrow, whereat Orion and other constellations arose.<sup>4</sup> Very noteworthy, too, is the fact that in the Brāhmaṇas (and in the Veda generally) there is no *one* Indian creation legend, which, as for instance the biblical legend in Europe, has found more or less general recognition in India, but that we find a great number of creation-legends, containing the most diversified ideas

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> *Sat.*, IV, 6, 4, 1; VII, 4, 1, 16; and frequently, VI, 1, 2, 12 ff. III, 9, 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Sat.* "X, 2, 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Atiāreya-Brāhmaṇa*, III, 88. Cf. *Sat.*, I, 7, 4, 1; II, 1, 2, 8; VI, 1, 2, 8.

and speculations, which cannot be made to harmonize with one another at all. Thus we find, for example, in the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, soon after the above quoted legend, an entirely different account of the creation. Prajāpati, here too,<sup>1</sup> tortured and mortified himself, in order to produce beings. He brought forth creatures, first the birds, then the small creeping things, then the snakes. But no sooner had they been created than they all vanished again, and Prajāpati was once more alone. He thought diligently about the reason for this, and at last the idea came to him that the creatures perished for lack of food. So he created new beings, from whose breasts he let milk flow forth, and these remained alive. Again, in another place in the same work,<sup>2</sup> Prajāpati creates the animals out of his vital organs, out of his mind he created man, out of his eye the horse, out of his breath the cow, out of his ear the sheep, out of his voice the goat. Because man is created out of Prajāpati's mind, and the mind is the first of the vital organs, therefore, man is the first and strongest of all animals.<sup>3</sup>

In the majority of the legends, Prajāpati is indeed the only Creator, from whom the world and beings derive their origin. But, already in the *Brāhmaṇas*, there are places where Prajāpati himself is regarded as created, and the creation begins with the primeval water or with the non-existing or with the Brahman. Thus there is the following creation-legend :

"In the beginning there existed here nothing but water, a sea of water. These waters desired to propagate their kind. They tortured themselves, they mortified themselves. And when they had mortified themselves<sup>4</sup> a golden egg originated in them. The year did not yet exist at that time; but as long as the duration of a year, this golden egg swam about. After a year a man arose out of it; that was Prajāpati. Therefore, a woman or a cow or a mare gives birth within a year, for Prajāpati was born after a year. He broke the golden egg open. But

<sup>1</sup> *Sat.*, II, 5, 1, 1-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Sat.*, VII, 5, 2, 6.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to the sacrificial animals in particular.

<sup>4</sup> As the term *Tapas* not only means mortification, but also heat, it is possible, in the case of the words 'when they had mortified themselves', which might also mean 'when they had become heated', to think of 'hatching-heat' and it is quite possible that there is an intentional ambiguity in the Sanskrit words. Cf. above pp. 99 and 200, Note 2, and Deussen, *AGPh.*, I, 1, p. 182; 2, pp. 60 ff.

at that time there did not yet exist any standing-place. So this golden egg, which bore him, swam about as long as the duration of a year. After a year he tried to speak, and he said: 'bhūh' and this (word) became this earth; (he said:) 'bhuvah' and this became yonder atmosphere, (he said 'suvar'<sup>1</sup> and this became the sky yonder. Therefore, a child tries to talk after a year, for after a year Prajāpati spoke. When Prajāpati first spoke, he uttered monosyllabic and bi-syllabic words, therefore, a child, when it first speaks, utters mono-syllabic and bi-syllabic words. Those (three words) form five syllables. Out of these he made the five seasons of the year, therefore, there are five seasons here.<sup>2</sup> This Prajāpati rose up above the worlds created in this manner after a year; therefore, after a year, a child tries to stand, for after a year Prajāpati rose up. He was born with the life of a thousand years. As one perceives the other bank of a river from a distance, so he perceived the other bank of his life.<sup>3</sup> And, singing praises and torturing himself he lived on, as he desired to propagate his species. He placed reproductive energy into himself, and with his mouth he created the gods.....After he had created them, he saw that there was, as it were, daylight (*divā*) for him, and that is the divinity of the gods (*deva*), that after he had created them, he saw that there was, as it were, daylight for him. Now he created with the breath of life which is below, the Asuras (demons)..... And after they were created, he saw that there was, as it were, darkness. He knew: 'Truly, I have created evil for myself, as there was darkness as soon as I had created them.' And even at this early stage he smote them with evil, and their day was then already done. Therefore, it is said: 'It is not true what is reported of the battles between gods and Asuras, partly in narratives (*anvākhyāna*), partly in legends (*itihāsa*),<sup>4</sup> for at that time already Prajāpati smote them with evil, at that time already their day was done.' . . . . After he had created the gods, he made the day out of that which was light, and after he had created the Asuras, he made the night out of that which was dark. So there now existed day and night." (*Sat.*, XI, 1, 6, 1-11).

Another creation-legend is still more remarkable, though also much less clear (*Sat.*, VI, 1, 1), beginning with the words: "In the beginning there was here only the non-existent (*Asat*)."<sup>5</sup> But it is at once added that this non-existent was really the Ṛṣis, for these, by means of self-torture and self-mortification have brought

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above p. 186, on the three sacred words bhūh, bhuvah, suvar (or svar).

<sup>2</sup> Namely: Spring, summer, rainy season, autumn, and winter.

<sup>3</sup> As Prajāpati was born, he must also be mortal.

<sup>4</sup> This is tantamount to declaring all the numerous legends of the Brāhmaṇas, which tell of the battles between gods and Asuras, to be lies!

forth everything. These Ṛṣis, however, were the Prāṇas or life-spirits, and these—how they did this is quite unintelligible—created first seven Puruṣas or 'persons' and then united these to a single puruṣa, to Prajāpati.

" This puruṣa (person) Prajāpati desired to multiply himself, to propagate his species. He tortured himself, he mortified himself. After he had tortured and mortified himself, he created first the Brahman, namely, the three-fold knowledge (*trayī vidyā*). This was the foundation for him. Therefore, it is said: 'The Brahman is the foundation of the All.' Therefore, one stands firm, when one has learnt the Veda; for this, the Brahman (i.e., the Veda) is the foundation."

It is then further related how Prajāpati, 'standing firm upon this foundation', mortified himself, and then first created the water. With the aid of the Veda he brought forth an egg; out of the egg arose Agni, and the egg-shell became the earth, and so on. It is a very prolix and confused account. It is, however, important to see that the Brahman, originally signifying prayer or magic spell, then sacred knowledge or Veda, was here already made the foundation of all existence. From this only a step remained to the doctrine of the Brahman itself as a creative principle. This doctrine too is already found in the *Satapatha-Brahmaṇa* (XI, 2, 3, 1) where it says:

" In the beginning there was here only the Brahman. This created the gods, and after it had created the gods, it gave them these worlds as dwellings,<sup>1</sup> (namely), this earth-world to Agni, the atmosphere to Vāyu and the heaven to Sūrya."

Thus we see how in the Brāhmaṇas—and therein lies their great significance for the history of Indian thought—all those ideas were already in the making, which attained their full development only in the Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads. Even the fundamental doctrine of the Upaniṣads, as *Sāṇḍilya* enunciated it, is already found in the *Satapatha-Brahmaṇa*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Literally "it made them ascend these worlds."

<sup>2</sup> X, 6, 3, Cf. below, pp. 217 f.

## Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads

When R. Garbe<sup>1</sup> calls the sacrificial science of the Brāhmaṇas "the only literary production of these barren centuries preceding the awakening of philosophical speculation," he gives expression to a universal, but in my opinion erroneous view. It would be too terrible to think that, with such a gifted people as the Indians must have been, even on the evidence of the R̥gvedic hymns, the futile hair-splittings on the purpose and meaning of sacrificial ceremonies should have occupied the entire thought even of the priests, to say nothing of the warriors and the remaining classes of the people. As a matter of fact we do find in the Brāhmaṇas themselves, as Sāyaṇa has already emphasized, and as we have partly seen above, beside ritual-precepts (Kalpa) and the discussions on the same, also myths and legends (itihāsa), cosmogonic myths (purāṇa), epic song verses (gāthā) and songs in praise of heroes (nārāśaṃsī).<sup>2</sup> In other words: the beginnings of epic poetry reach back into the period of the Brāhmaṇas. It is a matter of course that the great and costly sacrifices, with which the Brāhmaṇas deal, were only possible on the supposition of an active and industrious people, and it is unthinkable that the warriors and merchants, the farmers and herd owners, the craftsmen and labourers of that time should have sung no songs, related no stories. A little of what was sung and narrated in India at that early period. is preserved in the Vedic texts themselves (as, for example, the legend of Sunahśepa), but much is preserved in the later epics and Purāṇas. Moreover, the Brāhmaṇas presuppose the beginnings of grammar, phonetics, astronomy, *i.e.*, of those sciences which were later on pursued more independently as Vedāṅgas<sup>3</sup>; neither does the 'awakening of philosophical speculation' come *after* the period of the Brāhmaṇas: It comes *before* this period. We have seen how in some hymns of the R̥gveda doubts and scruples already arose

<sup>1</sup> *Beiträge zur indischen Kulturgeschichte* (Berlin, 1908), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Max Müller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, 2nd ed., London, 1903, p. 344. Cf. Sat., XI, 5, 6, 8 : 7, 9, 'Knowers of the narratives' (*Akhyānavidas*) are mentioned, in the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, III, 25, as a special class of literary men.

<sup>3</sup> On the beginnings of the Vedāṅgas in the Brāhmaṇas, cf. Max Müller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 110 ff.

concerning the popular belief in gods and the priestly cult. These sceptics and thinkers, these first philosophers of ancient India certainly did not remain isolated. That they, too, founded schools of thought, that their teachings were diffused, is proved by the 'philosophical' hymns of the Atharvaveda and isolated portions of the *Yajurveda-Saṃhitās*, in which, it is true, the teachings of the philosophers often appear only in caricature.<sup>1</sup> But even these caricatures prove that philosophical speculation was further pursued also during the centuries in which the sacrificial science flourished.

We are not, however, likely to find these oldest philosophers of ancient India among the priests, who were engaged in the science of sacrifice. For their teachings, which were directed against the plurality of gods, were in obvious contradiction to the interest of these priests. We can scarcely imagine that the Brahmans, who lived by the sacrifices, had many men amongst them who doubted the existence of Indra himself, and raised the question whether there were any sense in sacrificing to the gods.<sup>2</sup> It is much more probable that such sceptics and thinkers were to be found among those who were the most obnoxious to the priests, among the 'misers', who did not *believe*, i.e., who did not sacrifice and gave no gifts to the priests.

The fact that the warrior-caste was closely connected with the intellectual life and the literary activity of ancient times, is proved by numerous passages in the Upaniṣads, in fact already in the Brāhmaṇas. In the *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa* (XXVI, 5) a king Pratardana converses with the priests concerning the sacrificial science. In Book XI of the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa* there is repeated mention of King Janaka of Videha, who confounded all priests by his knowledge. The passage in which Janaka questions the priests Svetaketu, Somaśuśma and Yājñavalkya as to how they perform the fire-sacrifice (Agnihotra) is particularly instructive. None of them gives a satisfactory answer. But Yājñavalkya receives a gift of a hundred cows, because he has inquired the most deeply into the meaning of the sacrifice, although, as King Janaka

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above pp. 85 ff., 149 ff., 168 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. above, p. 85.

remarks, even upon him the true meaning of the Agnihotra has not yet dawned. After the king has departed, the priests say to one another : " Truly, this warrior has confounded us by his speech. Well ! We will challenge him to a theological debate (Brahmodya). " Yājñavalkya, however, dissuades them, saying : " We are Brahmans, but he is only a warrior. If we overcome him, whom shall we say that we have overcome ? But if he should overcome us, the people would say of us : ' A warrior has overcome the Brahmans ' ; do not think of such a thing ! " The two other priests agreed with him, but Yājñavalkya betakes himself to King Janaka and begs to be instructed by him.<sup>1</sup> Ayasthūna, too, the sacrificer, who instructs his priest Saulvāyana,<sup>2</sup> can hardly be a Brahman, although Sāyana declares him to be a Ṛṣi. According to tradition, even the Ṛṣis or composers of the hymns of the *R̥gveda* were by no means always members of the priesthood. Thus it is said of a Ṛṣi Kavaṣa, that he was the son of a female slave, a non-Brahman. When he wanted to participate in a great sacrifice, the priests drove him away, to die of hunger and thirst in the desert. But the waters and the goddess Sarasvatī take pity on him, he ' sees ' a hymn, whereupon the priests recognise him as a Ṛṣi and receive him back.<sup>3</sup>

In the Upaniṣads, however, we find not only kings, but also women and even people of dubious descent, taking an active part in the literary and philosophical aspirations and often possessors of the highest knowledge. Thus in the *Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad* Gārgī, the daughter of Vacaknu, questions Yājñavalkya at great length upon the origin of all existence, until the latter says : " Ask not too much, Gārgī, that thy head may not burst. Truly, concerning divinity one must not ask too much. Thou dost ask too much, Gārgī ; ask not too much ! " And in another place the same Gārgī, in the midst of an assembly of disputative scholars, advances towards the famous teacher Yājñavalkya with the words : " I arise against thee, Yājñavalkya ! As a hero's son from Benares or from

<sup>1</sup> *Sat.*, XI, 6, 2 ; cf. XI, 3, 1, 2-4 ; XI, 6, 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Sat.*, XI, 4, 2, M-20.

<sup>3</sup> *Āitareya-Brahmana*, II, 19.



Videha strings the slackened bow and arises with two foe-piercing arrows in his hand, so I arise against thee with two questions—answer me those!’ In the same Upaniṣad Yājñavalkya instructs his wife Maitreyī in the highest knowledge of the Ātman.<sup>1</sup> How little this highest knowledge was the sole privilege of the priests, is again proved by the amusing story of Raikva with the bullock-team,<sup>2</sup> who is sitting under his cart and scratching the itch, but who, in the possession of the highest wisdom is proud as a king. Humbly the wealthy donor Janaśruti approaches him in order to be instructed by him. Raikva calls him a ‘śūdra’ and laughs at the presents which the rich man offers him. Only when the latter gives him his beautiful daughter in marriage, does he condescend to instruct him.<sup>4</sup> The following story is also delightfully ingenuous.

“1. Satyakāma, the son of Jabālā, addressed his mother and said: ‘I wish to become a Brahmacārin (religious student), mother. Of what family am I?’

2. She said to him: ‘I do not know, my child, of what family thou art. In my youth when I had to move about much as a servant (waiting on the guests in my father’s house), I conceived thee. I do not know of what family thou art. I am Jabālā by name, thou art Satyakāma (Philaethes). Say that thou art Satyakāma Jābāla.’

3. He going to Gautama Hāridrumata said to him, ‘I wish to become a Brahmacārin with you, Sir. May I come to you, Sir?’

4. He said to him: ‘Of what family are you, my friend?’ He replied: ‘I do not know, Sir, of what family I am. I asked my mother, and she answered: “In my youth when I had to move about much as a servant, I conceived thee. I do not know of what family thou art. I am Jābāla by name, thou art Satyakāma,” I am, therefore, Satyakāma Jābālā, Sir.’

5. He said to him: ‘No one but a true Brāhmaṇa would thus speak out. Go and fetch fuel, friend, I shall initiate you. You have not swerved from the truth.’”

<sup>1</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Up.*, III, 6; III, 8; II, 4 and IV, 5.

<sup>2</sup> The meaning of *sayugvan* translated by ‘with the bullock-team’, is not certain. But other explanations (s. H. Lüders, *SBA.*, 1916, pp. 278 ff.) are not satisfactory. Raikva is called a ‘Brāhmaṇa’ in the sense of ‘one who knows the Brahman’, not in the sense of ‘a member of the priestly class’.

<sup>3</sup> The word is here used as a term of abuse.

<sup>4</sup> *Chāndogya-Up.*, IV, 1-3.

<sup>5</sup> *Chāndogya-Up.*, IV, 4. Translated by Max Müller, *SPE.*, Vol. I, p. 60. In the Vāṃśas or lists of teachers of the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa* numerous teachers are only

The passage proves how lightly brahmanical descent was treated at that ancient period, while later—in the law-books—it is again and again emphasized that only the Brahman may teach the Veda, and only a member of the three highest castes may be instructed in the Veda. In the Upaniṣads, however, we are repeatedly told that kings or warriors are in possession of the highest knowledge, and that Brahmans go to them for instruction. Thus the Brahman Gautama, father of Svetaketu, goes to King Pravāhaṇa in order to be instructed by him concerning the Beyond. And it is related that the desire of Gautama was very awkward for the king: for the doctrine which he had to proclaim, had never before penetrated to the Brahmans, “and, therefore, it is that in all the worlds the mastery has fallen to the share of the warrior-class.” Finally, however, the king does impart the doctrine to him,—and it is the doctrine of *transmigration*, which here, where for the first time it appears clearly and distinctly, proves to be a doctrine which emanated from the warrior-class, and was originally foreign to brahmanical theology.<sup>1</sup> Another passage proves that the chief doctrine of the Upaniṣads, too, the doctrine of the *Ātman*, the All-One, originated in non-brahmanical circles. Here five highly learned Brahmans betake themselves to the wise Uddālaka Āruṇi, in order to learn from him the doctrine of the *Ātman*. He, however, thought to himself: “These great and learned scholars will question me, and I shall not be able to reply to everything. Well! I will direct them to some one else.” And he directed them to King Aśvapati Kaikeya, to whom they actually went for instruction.<sup>2</sup>

While, then, the Brahmans were pursuing their barren sacrificial science, other circles were already engaged upon those highest questions which were at last treated so admirably in the Upaniṣads. From these circles, which originally were not connected with the priestly caste, proceeded the forest-hermits and

mentioned by their *maternal name*. Cf. above, p. 194 Note 1. Satyakāma means: ‘truth-loving’. The passage has also been translated (into German) and explained by H. Lüders, SBA., 1922, pp. 227 ff.

<sup>1</sup> *Chāndogya-Up.*, V, 3. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Up.*, VI, 2. In the *Kauṣītaki-Up.*, I, 1 the Kṣatriya Citra instructs the ‘first of the priests’, Āruṇi, about the Beyond.

<sup>2</sup> *Chāndogya-Up.*, V, 11 ff. A version of this narrative is already to be found in *Sat.*, X, 6, 1.

wandering ascetics, who not only renounced the world and its pleasures, but also kept aloof from the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Brahmans. Different sects, more or less opposed to Brahmanism, were soon formed from these same circles, among which sects the Buddhists attained to such great fame. The extensive propagation of these sects, particularly of Buddhism, proves on what fruitful soil the doctrines of those ancient philosophers must have fallen, and how much response the doctrines which were opposed to the sacrifice found among the cultured classes.

This is, however, by no means tantamount to saying that the Brahmans took no part in philosophical speculation; for warriors and members of the higher castes in general were educated in the Brahmans' schools, and there must have been a brisk exchange of philosophical ideas between the Brahmans and the other educated classes at all times.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, not every Brahman was a priest or an adept in the art of the sacrifice. There were Brahmans, both rich and poor, who pursued worldly professions,<sup>2</sup> and there must have been many of these who sympathised with the sceptics and the exponents of new doctrines. Lastly, as has so often been the case in the history of Indian

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Hillebrandt, *Aus Brahmanas und Upanisaden*, pp. 10 ff., with whom I quite agree when he says that the philosophy of the Upanisads should be called neither a 'Brahmanical' nor a 'Kṣatriya philosophy'. But it should not be doubted that non-Brahmans, especially Kṣatriyas, had a considerable share in the spiritual and intellectual life of ancient India. See P. Deussen, *System des Vedanta*, Leipzig, 1883, pp. 18 f., AGPh., I, 1, 166; 1, 2, 17 ff.; R. Garbe, *Beiträge Zur indischen Kulturgeschichte*, Berlin, 1903, pp. 1 ff.; R. Fick, *The Social Organisation in North-East India in Buddha's Time*, transl. by S. Maitra, Calcutta, 1920, pp. 90 ff. The view that the Kṣatriyas had an essential share in the development of the Upanisad ideas, has been contested by H. Oldenberg, *Die Lehre der Upanishaden und die Anfänge des Buddhismus*, Göttingen, 1915, pp. 166 f.; P. Oltramare, *L'histoire des idées théosophiques dans l'Inde*, I, 96 f.; A. B. Keith, *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, p. 50 and JRAS., 1915, p. 550; also by S. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, I, Cambridge, 1922, pp. 33 ff., though he admits (p. 31) "that among the Kṣatriyas in general there existed earnest philosophic enquiries which must be regarded as having exerted an important influence in the formation of the Upanisad doctrines." The fact is that the ancient Upanisads as literary compositions were arranged in the Brahmanic schools and were 'Brahmanical' in this sense. But it does not follow from this that all or even the most essential ideas contained in these texts were first conceived in priestly circles. It is worth mentioning that even the *Āpastambīya-Dharmasūtra* (II, 2, 4, 25) permits a Brahman to learn under a Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya teacher 'in time of need' (*āpadi*).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Oldenberg, *Die Lehre der Upanishaden*, etc., p. 5.

thought, the Brahmans had the knack of bringing into line with their own priestly wisdom and orthodoxy even such ideas as were in opposition to them. They succeeded in doing this by means of the doctrine of the four Āśramas (stages of life), whereby the ascetic and hermit life was made an essential part of the brahmanical religious system. This doctrine consists of the principle that every 'Aryan', i.e., every man belonging to one of the three highest castes, who wishes to lead an ideal life, must pass through four stages of life. First, as a pupil (Brahmacārin), he must live with a teacher and learn the Veda; when his period of training is accomplished, he must found a household, and as a householder (Gṛhastha) beget children and offer the prescribed sacrifices to the gods, or have them offered. On approaching old age, however, he should quit his house, and, as a forest-hermit (Vānaprastha) henceforth perform only ~~limited~~ sacrificial service, but meditate the more upon the mystical and symbolical significance of the sacrifice. But only when he feels his end approaching, shall he give up this sacrifice and meditation also, renounce all good works, and as an ascetic fleeing from the world (Sannyāsin) henceforth ponder only over Brahman, the highest world-principle, and strive for union with it.<sup>1</sup>

In the Brāhmaṇas or as appendices to them we find texts which were known as Āraṇyakas or 'forest texts'. These texts comprised everything which was of a secret, uncanny character, and spelt danger to the uninitiated, and which, for that reason, might only be taught and learnt in the forest, and not in the villages. The main contents of these Āraṇyakas are no longer rules for the performance of the sacrifices and the explanation of ceremonies, but the mysticism and symbolism of sacrifice, and priestly philosophy. After the doctrine of the Āśramas had been set up as the brahmanical ideal of life, these 'forest texts', naturally came to be the prescribed portions of the Veda to be

<sup>1</sup> In the oldest Upaniṣads (*Chāndogya-Up.*, II, 23; VIII, 1) three branches of an ideal life are spoken of, but there is no mention yet of three or four successive stages of life. Only in later Upaniṣads (*Maitr.* IV, 8; *Āśrama-Up.*), in the *Mahābhārata* and in the *Dharmasāstras*, the Āśrama theory is fully developed. See Deussen, *Sechsig Upanishads*, pp. 96 f.; ERE., II, 128 ff.; and Jacobi, ERE., II, 802.

studied by forest-hermits.<sup>1</sup> Now, the oldest *Upaniṣads* are in part included in these 'forest texts', and in part appended to them; and it is often difficult to draw the line between the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣads*. These texts formed, in more senses than one, the *Vedānta*, i.e., 'the end of the Veda'.<sup>2</sup> Firstly most of these texts are of later origin, and fall chronologically into the *end* of the Vedic period. Further, we must never forget that the whole of this Vedic literature did not consist of written books, but was only transmitted by word of mouth. What we find in the individual *Brāhmaṇas*, therefore, and usually call 'works' or 'books' is nothing but the subject of instructions of various priests' schools. The subject was taught to the pupils within a certain period embracing a number of years during which the pupil had to live with the teacher and serve him. The teaching of that which was the most difficult to understand, the mysteries, the mystical and philosophical doctrines, as they are contained in the *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣads*, naturally fell into the *end* of this period of instruction. These texts form the *end*, too, of the Veda-recital, as a sacred act and religious duty. The later philosophers, lastly, saw in these doctrines of the *Upaniṣads* not the *end*, but the *final* aim of the Veda.<sup>3</sup>

As *Vedānta* or 'Veda-end', the *Āraṇyakas*, as well as the older *Upaniṣads*, belong to the various Vedic schools; they form, in fact, only component parts of the *Brāhmaṇas*. Thus an *Aitareya-Āraṇyaka*, in which the *Aitareya-Upaniṣad* is included, is tacked on to the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* of the *Rgveda*. The *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa*, which also belongs to the *Rgveda*, ends with the *Kauṣītaki-Āraṇyaka*, of which the *Kauṣītaki-*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Oldenberg, *Die Hymnen des Rigveda*, I, Berlin 1888, p. 201 and NGGW., 1915, 382 ff. Rāmānuja (SBE., Vol. 48, p. 645, states that certain mantras and sacrificial rites are discussed at the beginning of *Upaniṣads* 'owing to their having, like the latter, to be studied in the forest'. In the *Aruṇi-Upaniṣad*, 2 (The Minor *Upaniṣads*, ed. F. O. Schrader, I, p. 7; Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishads des Veda*, p. 693) it is said that the hermit should study of all the Vedas only the *Āraṇyaka* and the *Upaniṣad*. Manu, VI, 29, says that the hermit should learn 'the *Upaniṣad* texts' (*aupaniṣadiḥ śrutiḥ*). Strict rules of austerity are prescribed at the reading of the *Upaniṣads*, s. *Baudhāyana-Dharmasūtra*, II, 10, 18, 15 ff. Cf. also Max Müller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 318 ff.

<sup>2</sup> 'Vedānta' means originally only the *Upaniṣads*. The word was only later used to mean the system of philosophy based on the *Upaniṣads*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. P. Deussen, *System des Vedānta*, pp. 3 ff. AGPh., 1, 2, p. 5.

*Upaniṣad* (also called the *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa-Upaniṣad*) forms only a part.<sup>1</sup> In the *Black Yajurveda* the *Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka*<sup>2</sup> is only a continuation of the *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*, and the conclusion of the *Āraṇyaka* is formed by the *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* and the *Mahā-Nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad*. In the great *Sātapatha-Brāhmaṇa* of the *White Yajurveda*, the first third of Book XIV is an *Āraṇyaka*, while the end of the book is formed by the greatest and most important of all *Upaniṣads*, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*. The *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*, the first section of which is nothing but an *Āraṇyaka*, belongs to a *Brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāmaveda*—probably the *Tāṇḍya-Mahā-Brāhmaṇa*. The so-called *Jaiminīya-Upaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa*<sup>3</sup> is an *Āraṇyaka* of the Jaiminīya- or 'Talavakāra-school of the *Sāmaveda*, and the *Kena-Upaniṣad*, also called *Talavakāra-Upaniṣad*, forms a part of it.

With the exception of the *Mahā-Nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad*, which was only added to the *Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka* at a later period, all the above-named *Upaniṣads* belong to the oldest works of this kind. In language and style they resemble the *Brāhmaṇas*, component parts of which they are, or to which they are immediately attached. It is the same simple, slightly clumsy *prose*, but—especially in the narrative portions—by no means lacking in beauty. Only half of the *Kena-Upaniṣad* is metrical, and it is the latest of the *Upaniṣads* enumerated. Although each one of the great *Upaniṣads* contains, as Deussen<sup>4</sup> says, "earlier and later texts side by side, hence the age of each individual piece must be determined separately," yet even the later portions of the above-mentioned *Upaniṣads* may claim great antiquity, if only on linguistic

<sup>1</sup> The *Aitareya-Āraṇyaka* has been published and translated into English by A. B. Keith (*Anecdota Oxoniensia*, Aryan Series, Part IX, Oxford, 1919) and as an appendix to it a portion of the *Sāṅkhāyana-Āraṇyaka* (VII-XV). Adhyāyas I and II of this *Āraṇyaka* are published and translated by W. Friedlaender, *Der mahāvratā Abschnitt des Sāṅkhāyana-Āraṇyaka*, Berlin, 1900, Adhyāyas III to VI, by Cowell, Calcutta, 1901. On the title, antiquity and contents of the *Sāṅkhāyana*- or *Kauṣītaki-Āraṇyaka*. S. Keith, *JRAS.*, 1908, 363 ff. The *Sāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka*, with an Appendix on the Mahāvratā, (translated) by A. B. Keith, OTF., London, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. with Sāyana's Comm. in *Bibl. Ind.* and in *An. SS.*, No. 36.

<sup>3</sup> The *Jaiminīya* or *Talavakāra Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*, Text, Translation and Notes by Hanna Oertel, in *GAOS.* Vol. XVI, 1896.

<sup>4</sup> *AGPh.*, 1, 2, p. 22.

grounds.<sup>1</sup> We may take it that the greater Upaniṣads, like the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*- and the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*, originated in the fusion of several longer or shorter texts which had originally been regarded as separate Upaniṣads. This would also explain the fact that the same texts are sometimes to be found in several Upaniṣads. The individual texts of which the greater Upaniṣads are composed, all belong to a period which cannot be very far removed from that of the Brahmanas and the Āraṇyakas, and is before Buddha and before Pāṇini. For this reason the six above-mentioned Upaniṣads,—Aitareya, Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Taittirīya, Kauṣītaki and Kena—undoubtedly represent the earliest stage of development in the literature of the Upaniṣads. They contain the so-called Vedānta doctrine in its pure, original form.

A few Upaniṣads which are written entirely or for the most part in *verse*, belong to a period which is somewhat later, though still early, and probably pre-Buddhistic. These, too, are assigned to certain Vedic schools, though they have not always come down to us as portions of an Āraṇyaka. In this category we may include the *Kaṭha*- or *Kāṭhaka-Upaniṣad*,<sup>2</sup> the very name of which points to its connection with a school of the *Black Yajurveda* (see above p. 169). The *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad*,<sup>3</sup> and the *Mahā-Nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad* which has come down to us as an appendix to the *Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka*, are also counted among the texts of the *Black Yajurveda*. The short, but most valuable *Iṣā-Upaniṣad*,<sup>4</sup> which forms the last section of the

<sup>1</sup> On the language of the Upaniṣads see B. Liebich, *Panini*, Leipzig, 1891, p. 62 ff.; Otto Wecker, *Der Gebrauch der Kasus in der Upaniṣadliteratur*, Göttingen, 1905 (Bezz Beitr.); W. Kirfel, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Nominalkomposition in den Upaniṣads und im Epos*, Diss. Bonn, 1908; A. Fürst, *Der Sprachgebrauch der älteren Upaniṣads verglichen mit dem der früheren vedischen Perioden und des klassischen Sanskrit*, Diss. (Tübingen), Göttingen, 1915; also Oldenberg, *Zur Geschichte der altindischen Prosa*, pp. 28 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Edited with Saṅkara's commentary by Śrīdhara-Sāstri Pāthaka, Poona, 1919; translated by W. D. Whitney, *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 21. On text-criticism s. R. Fritzsche, *ZDMG.*, 66, 1912, 727 f.; Hillebrandt, *ZDMG.*, 68, 1914, 579 ff.; and Hertel, *Die Weisheit der Upanishaden*, pp. 42 ff.

<sup>3</sup> On this Up. s. Weber, *Ind. Stud.* I, 420 ff. and R. G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems* ('Grundriss' III, 6, 1912), pp. 106 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Translation (with text) and analysis by Aurobindo Ghose, Calcutta (Ideal and Progress Series, No. 5). Metrical translation by H. Baynes, *Ind. Ant.*, 26, 1897, 218 ff.

Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā, belongs to the 'White Yajurveda'. The *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad*,<sup>1</sup> and the *Praśna-Upaniṣad*,<sup>2</sup> half of which is in prose, half in verse, belong to the *Atharvaveda*. Though these six Upaniṣads, too, contain the Vedānta doctrine, we here find it interwoven to a great extent with Sāṃkhya and Yoga doctrines and with monotheistic views. We must, however, leave it to future scholars to decide to what degree the various philosophical doctrines mingled, and to what degree this mingling was consequent upon retouched versions of the text; for all these texts show distinct signs of having been touched up. There are for instance, as many as three separate recensions of the *Mahā-Nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad*, and this shows how uncertain the text is.<sup>3</sup>

The *Maitrāyaṇīya-Upaniṣad*,<sup>4</sup> which, by reason of its title, is attributed to a school of the *Black Yajurveda*,<sup>5</sup> belongs to a considerably later period which must have been post-Buddhistic. It is again written in prose, like the earliest Upaniṣads. This prose, however, no longer shows any Vedic traces. On the grounds of language, style and contents, we may place the work

On text criticism s. Baynes, *loc. cit.*, and Hertel, *Die Weisheit der Upaniṣaden*, pp. 25 ff.

<sup>1</sup> J. Hertel (*Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad, kritische Ausgabe*, Leipzig, 1924) has tried to restore the original text of this Upaniṣad. Its connection with the *Atharvaveda* (X, 7 and 8) has been pointed out by Hertel, *loc. cit.*, pp. 45 ff. The title probably means 'the Upaniṣad of the bald-headed', that is, of some sect of ascetics with shaven heads. Hertel (*loc. cit.*, pp. 64 ff.) suggests some connection between the *Muṇḍaka-Up.*, and the Jains.

<sup>2</sup> In this Upaniṣad the sage Pippalāda, the founder of the Paippalāda school of the *Atharvaveda*, appears as teacher. On text criticism s. Hillebrandt, *ZDMG.*, 68, 1914, 561 f.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. Zimmermann, *Die Quellen der Mahā-nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad und das Verhältnis der verschiedenen Rezensionen zu einander*, Diss., Berlin, 1913, and *Ind. Ant.*, 44, 1915, 180 ff., 177 ff.; Barth., *RHR.*, 19, 1889, 150 f. = *Oeuvres*, II, 23. Edition by G. A. Jacob, HSS Nr. 85, 1888.

<sup>4</sup> Other titles are: *Maitrāyaṇa-Brahmaṇa-Up.*, *Maitrāyaṇa-Up.*, *Maitrāyaṇī-Up.*, and *Maitri-Up.*, s. Max Müller, *SBE.*, Vol. 15, pp. xlii ff. There are several recensions of the text. The text (ed., with the commentary of Rāmānirṭha, by E. B. Cowell, 2nd ed. revised by Satishchandra Vidyabhusan, *Bibl Ind.*, 1913 ff.) which has hitherto been translated consists of 7 Prapāṭhakas. But the two last Prapāṭhakas (declared to be supplementary by Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishads*, p. 380) are missing in the edition of Mahadeva Sastri (*Sāmānya Vedānta Upanishads*, pp. 888 ff.), where Prep., IV, 5 corresponds to the 5th Prapāṭhaka of the older editions. A different work is the metrical *Maitreya Up.* (*Minor Upaniṣads*, ed. Schrader, I, pp. 105 ff.), which only in the prose introduction partly agrees with our *Maitrāyaṇīya-Up.*

<sup>5</sup> In some MSS. it is given as part of the *Maitrāyaṇīya-Saṃhitā*.



in the period of classical Sanskrit literature. The *Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad*<sup>1</sup> of the *Atharvaveda* probably also belongs to this same later period. Śaṅkara, who quotes the twelve Upaniṣads previously enumerated as sacred and authoritative texts in his commentary on the Brahmasūtras, mentions neither the *\*Maitrāyaṇīya* nor the *Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad*.<sup>2</sup>

Though the two last-named texts must be among the latest offshoots of Vedic literature, they too may still be classed together with the twelve earlier texts as *Vedic Upaniṣads*; and these fourteen Upaniṣads only can be used as sources for the history of the earliest Indian philosophy.

Though the remaining Upaniṣads—and there are over 200 texts which have come down to us either independently as Upaniṣads or in larger collections—are also attributed by tradition to one or other of the Vedic schools, only a few of them have any real connection with the Veda. Most of them are religious rather than philosophical works, and contain the doctrines and views of schools of philosophers and religious sects of a much later period. Many of them are much more nearly related to the Purāṇas and Tantras chronologically as well as in content, than to the Veda. This latest Upaniṣad literature may be classified as follows, according to its purpose and contents:

<sup>1</sup> On this Upaniṣad s. H. Baynes, *Ind. Ant.*, 26, 1897, 160 ff. The *Gauḍapādīya-Kārikas*, one of the most important works of Indian philosophy, is based on the *Māṇḍūkya-Up.* Pandit Vidhusekhara Bhattacharyya (*Sir Asutosh Mookerjee's Silver Jubilee Volume*, pp. 103 ff.) has proved that Śaṅkara is not the author of the commentary ascribed to him on this Up. The same learned Pandit thinks, as he writes to me (in a letter dated 27th August, 1924) and as he intends to prove, that the *Māṇḍūkya-Up.* is later than *Gauḍapāda's Kārikas*, and was even unknown to Śaṅkara.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Deussen, *System des Vedānta*, pp. 32 f., on the Upaniṣads quoted by Śaṅkara. As regards the chronological order of the fourteen Vedic Upaniṣads, absolute certainty cannot be obtained. Keith (*The Aitareya Aranyaka*, pp. 45 ff.) has tried to prove that the *Aitareya-Up.* is the oldest, dating back to about 700-600 B.C. Others consider the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Up.* to be the oldest. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, I, pp. 141 f. says that "the accepted dates for the early Upaniṣads are 1000 B.C. to 800 B.C." By whom are these dates 'accepted'? Cf. Deussen in *Transactions of the 3rd International Congress for the History of Religion*, Oxford, 1906, II, pp. 19 ff.; Oldenberg, *Die Lehre der Upanishaden*, pp. 288 f., 341; Hillebrandt, *Aus Brahmanas und Upanishaden*, p. 170. Benimadhab Barua (*A History of Pre-Buddhist Indian Philosophy*, Calcutta, 1921) has made a remarkable and creditable, though not always successful, attempt at establishing a chronology of the philosophical ideas contained in the Upaniṣads, apart from the chronology of the literary works. But his designation of the philosophy of the Upaniṣads as 'post-Vedic' (pp. 39 ff.) is very confusing.

(1) those works which present Vedānta doctrines,<sup>1</sup> (2) those which teach Yoga,<sup>2</sup> (3) those which extol the ascetic life (sannyāsa),<sup>3</sup> (4) those which glorify Viṣṇu,<sup>4</sup> and (5) those which glorify Śiva as the highest divinity, and (6) Upaniṣads of the Śāktas and of other more insignificant sects.<sup>5</sup> These Upaniṣads are written partly in prose, partly in a mixture of prose and verse, and partly in epic Ślokas. Whilst the latter are on the same chronological level as the latest Purāṇas and Tantras, there are some works among the former which may be of greater antiquity, and which might consequently still be associated with the Veda. The following are probably examples of such earlier Upaniṣads: the Jābāla Upaniṣad<sup>6</sup> which is quoted by Śaṅkara as an authority, and which closes with a beautiful description of the ascetic named Paramahansa; the *Paramahansa-Upaniṣad*,<sup>7</sup> describing the path of the Paramahansa still more vividly; the very extensive *Subāla-Upaniṣad*,<sup>8</sup> often quoted by Rāmānuja, and dealing with cosmogony, physiology, psychology and metaphysics; the *Garbha-Upaniṣad*,<sup>9</sup> part of which reads like a

<sup>1</sup> The Sāmānya Vedānta Upanishads with the commentary of Sri Upanishad-Brahma-Yogin, ed. by Pandit A. Mahadeva Sastri. Adyar Library (Theosophical Society), 1921.

<sup>2</sup> The Yoga Upanishads with the Commentary of Sri Upanishad-Brahma-Yogin, ed. by A. Mahadeva Sastri. Adyar, 1920. The *Cūlikā-Up.*, and *Amṛtanāda-Up.* have been edited and translated into German by A. Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, 9, pp. 10 ff., 23 ff.

<sup>3</sup> The Minor Upaniṣads critically edited by F. Otto Schrader, Vol. I: *Sannyāsa-Upaniṣads*. The Adyar Library, Madras, S. 1912. The *Ind. Ant.*, 2, 1878, pp. 266 f.) is a purely Tantric work.

<sup>4</sup> The *Vaiṣṇava-Up.* with the Commentary of Sri Upanishad-Brahma-Yogin, ed. by A. Mahadeva Sastri, Adyar 1923. The *Rāma-Tāpanīya-Up.*, text and German translation by A. Weber, ABA., 1864, pp. 271 ff.; the *Nṛsiṃha-Tāpanīya-Up.* by the same scholar, *Ind. Stud.*, 9, 53-178. On *Nirālamba-Up.* and *Garuḍa-Up.* see Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, 3, 324 ff.; 17, 186 ff., 161 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Edition of the *Saiva* and *Śākta Up.* by Pandit Mahadeva Sastri of the Adyar Library are in preparation. This classification of the non-Vedic Upaniṣads was first proposed by Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishads*, pp. 542 f., and then adopted by F. O. Schrader, *Minor Upaniṣads*, pp. ii f. in an amplified form. It is useful for practical purposes, though not always strictly applicable. For some Upaniṣads teach brahmanavidyā by means of Yoga, and might be classified as well with the Vedānta as with the Yoga Upaniṣads; and some Yoga Upaniṣads might as well be classified as Vaiṣṇava, etc.

<sup>6</sup> *Minor Upaniṣads*, ed. F. O. Schrader, I, pp. 57 ff. Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishads*, pp. 706 ff.

<sup>7</sup> *Minor Upaniṣads*, I, pp. 49 ff.; Deussen, *loc. cit.*, pp. 703 ff.

<sup>8</sup> *Sāmānya Vedānta Upanishads*, ed. Mahadeva Sastri, pp. 460 ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Sāmānya Vedānta Up.*, pp. 168 ff.; Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishads*, pp. 605 ff.

treatise on embryology, but which is obviously a meditation on the embryo with the aim of preventing rebirth in a new womb; and the *Sivaite Atharvaśiras-Upaniṣad*,<sup>1</sup> which is already mentioned in the Dharmasūtras<sup>2</sup> as a sacred text, and by virtue of which sins can be washed away. The *Vajrasūcikā-Upaniṣad*,<sup>3</sup> which teaches that only he who knows the Brahman as the One without a second, is a Brahmin, is not of very late origin. Another factor which makes it difficult to determine the date of these Upaniṣads is the fact that they are often to be found in various recensions of very uneven bulk.<sup>4</sup>

These *non-Vedic Upaniṣads*, as we may call them, have come down in large collections<sup>5</sup> which are not ancient as such.

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<sup>1</sup> Deussen, *loc. cit.*, pp. 716 ff. See also Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, etc.*, pp. 111 f.

<sup>2</sup> Gautama, XIX, 12; Baudhāyana, III, 10, 10: *Vāsiṣṭha*, XXII, 9; XXVIII, 14 *Viṣṇu*, 56, 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Sāmānya Vedānto Up.*, p. 416 ff. In some MSS. this Upaniṣad is ascribed to Saṅkara. One version of it, expanded into an attack on the caste system, is ascribed to the Buddhist poet Aśvaghoṣa. Cf. A. Weber, *ABA.*, 1859, 259 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Thus Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishads*, pp. 743 ff., translates a Mahā-Upaniṣad which is so short, that it does not deserve its name 'the Great Upaniṣad' at all, while in the South-Indian recension (*Sāmānya Vedānto Up.*, pp. 234 ff.) it is indeed one of the longest Upaniṣads.

<sup>5</sup> The collection translated into Persian in 1656, called Oupnek'hat (see above, p. 19) contains 50 Upaniṣads. An analysis of these Upaniṣads from Duperron's Latin translation has been given by A. Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, Vols. 1, 2 and 9. On a list of 52 Upaniṣads of the *Atharvaveda* see Colebrooke, *Misc. Essays*, I, pp. 92 ff., and Bhandarkar, *Report*, 1883-84, pp. 24 f. For another list see Weber, *HSS.*, Verz., p. 95. Editions: Eleven *Atharvāṇa-Upanishads*, ed. by G. A. Jacob, *BSS.* Nr. 40, 1891. At the NSI, Bombay, a collection of 108 Upaniṣads has been published in 1913, one of 113 Upaniṣads in 1917, one of 28 Upaniṣads in 1918, the eleven (principal) Upaniṣads (*Ekūdaśopaniṣadah*), with commentaries, by Swami Achintya Bhagawan, *ib.*, 1910. The most important Upaniṣads have been edited, with Saṅkara's commentaries, in the *Bibl. Ind.* and in *AnsS.*, Nos. 5-17, 29-31, 62-64. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Up.* and *Chāndogya-Up.* have been critically edited and translated into German by O. Böhtlingk, St. Petersburg and Leipzig, 1889, the *Kātha-*, *Aitareya-*, and *Praśna-Up.* by the same scholar in *BSGW.*, 1890, and critical notes on these Upaniṣads by the same scholar in *BSGW.*, 1891. *Kena-Up.* with commentary by Śrīdhara-sāstrī Paṭhaka, Poona, 1919. Translations: (Twelve principal) Upaniṣads translated by Max Müller, *SBE.*, Vols. 1 and 15. *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads* translated by R. E. Hume, Oxford, 1921. *Sechzig Upanishads des Veda übersetzt von*, P. Deussen, Leipzig, 1897. Selections in German translation by A. Hillebrandt, *Aus Brahmanas und Upanishaden*, Jena, 1921, and J. Hertel, *Die Weisheit der Upanishaden*, München, 1921. Translations of *Iśā-*, *Kena-*, and *Mundaka-*, and of *Kātha-* and *Praśna-Up.* with Saṅkara's commentary by S. Sitaram Sastri, Madras, 1898; the *Chāndogya-Up.* with Saṅkara's Comm. translated by Ganganath Jha, Madras, 1899; *Aitareya-Up.* with Saṅkara's Comm. translated by H. M. Bhadkamkar, Bombay, 1899, *Avritatindu and Kaivalya Upanishads* with Comm. translated by A. Mahadeva Sastri; 2nd ed., Madras,

For the philosopher Saṅkara (about 800 A.D.) still quotes the Upaniṣads as parts of the Veda texts to which they belong; and even Rāmānuja (about 1100 A.D.) speaks of the 'Chandogas,' the 'Vājasaneyins' or the 'Kauṣītakins' when quoting the Upaniṣads of the schools in question: the *Subāla-Upaniṣad* is the only one which he quotes by this title. In the *Muktikā-Upaniṣad*, which is certainly one of the latest, we read that salvation may be attained by the study of the 108 Upaniṣads, and a list of 108 Upaniṣads is set forth, classified according to the four Vedas: 10 Upaniṣads coming under the *Ṛgveda*, 19 under the *White Yajurveda*, 32 under the *Black Yajurveda*, 16 under the *Sāmaveda* and 31 under the *Atharvaveda*. This classification, however, can scarcely be based on an ancient tradition.<sup>1</sup> All these Upaniṣads which are, properly speaking, non-Vedic, are generally called 'Upaniṣads of the Atharvaveda'. They were associated with the *Atharvaveda*, because the authority of this Veda as sacred tradition was always dubious and it was therefore no difficult matter to associate all kinds of apocryphal texts with the literature belonging to the *Atharvaveda*. Furthermore, the *Atharvaveda*, as we have seen, was above all the Veda of magic and the secretiveness connected with it.<sup>2</sup> The real meaning of 'Upaniṣad'—and this meaning has never been forgotten—was 'secret doctrine'. What was more natural than that a large class of works which were regarded as Upaniṣads or secret doctrines, should be joined to the *Atharvaveda*, which itself was indeed nothing but a collection of secret doctrines!

The word '*Upaniṣad*' is, in fact, derived from the verb 'upa-ni-sad', 'to sit down near some one', and it originally meant the sitting down of the pupil near the teacher for the

1921. The principal Upaniṣads with Madhva's commentary translated by Rai Bahadur Śrīśa Chandra Vidyārṇava, *Iṣā* and *Kena* according to Saṅkara by the same, and *Svetāśvatara* translated by Siddheshvari Prasad Varmā Śāstri appeared in the *Sacred books of the Hindus*, Panini Office, Allahabad. A useful help for the study of the Upaniṣads is G. A. Jacob's *Concordance*, BSS., 1891. A selected and classified bibliography of the Upaniṣads is given by R. E. Hume, *loc. cit.*, pp. 459 ff.

<sup>1</sup> Rāmānuja quotes the *Garbha-Up.* and the *Mantrikā-* (=Cūlika-) *Up.* as *Atharvaveda-Upaniṣads*, although the list in the *Muktikā-Up.* counts the one as belonging to the *Black*, and the other to the *White Yajurveda*.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 130 f.

purpose of a confidential communication, therefore a 'confidential' or 'secret session'. Out of this idea of the 'secret session', the meaning 'secret doctrine' that which is communicated at such a confidential session—was developed.<sup>1</sup> The Indians generally give as a synonym of the word '*upanīṣad*' the word '*rahasyam*', which means 'mystery, secret'. In the Upanīṣad texts themselves the expressions '*iti rahasyam*' and '*iti upanīṣad*' are frequently used side by side in the sense of 'thus says the secret doctrine'. Often enough we find in the Upanīṣads themselves the warning against communicating some doctrine to an unworthy one. 'This doctrine of Brahman', it is said for example,<sup>2</sup> 'may a father impart to his eldest son or to a trusted pupil, but not to another, whoever he may be, even if the latter should give him the whole earth, surrounded by the waters and filled with treasures'. Very frequently it is also related in the Upanīṣads how a teacher is entreated to communicate some knowledge or other, but only after repeated entreaty and urging of the pupil, gives way and reveals his doctrine to him.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Deussen, AGPh., 1, 2, pp. 14 ff., with whom I fully agree in rejecting Oldenberg's explanation of *Upanīṣad* (ZDMG., 50, 1896, 458 ff.; 54, 1900, 70 ff.; *Die Lehre der Upanishaden*, etc., pp. 36 f., 155 ff., 318 f.) as 'a form of worship'. *Upanīṣad* is used frequently enough as a synonym of *rahasyam*, but never synonymous with *upāsana*. Besides, E. Senart (*Florilegium Melchior de Vogüé*, Paris, 1909, pp. 575 ff.) has shown that even the verb *upās* in the Upanīṣads does not mean 'to worship', but 'to have a profound knowledge, to know or to believe for certain'. But even his translation of *upanīṣad* by 'knowledge, belief' ('connaissance, croyance') does not hit the meaning of the word as well as 'secret doctrine'. M. R. Bodas (JBRAS., 22, pp. 69 f.) takes the original meaning of *upanīṣad* to be 'sitting down near the sacrificial fire', as the conversions contained in the Upanīṣads are said to have taken place at the great sacrifices. This is not more probable than the explanation of J. W. Hauer (*Anfänge der Yoga-praxis*, p. 27), who gives 'mysterious wisdom obtained by Tapas and meditation' as the original meaning of *upanīṣad*, connecting it with the quiet sitting as part of the Yoga practice. Nārāyaṇa in his commentary on *Manu*, VI, 29, defines *upanīṣad* as 'that which is recited seated near', i.e. '(a text) which is recited (while the pupils are) seated near (the teacher)'; see Bühler. SBE., Vol. 25, pp. 203 n Cf. also Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, I, pp. 91 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Chāndogya-Up.*, III, 11, 5 f. Cf. Deussen, *loc. cit.*, pp. 12 f.

<sup>3</sup> The word *upanīṣad* occurs in the Upanīṣads themselves in three senses; it means :—(1) 'mystic sense', e.g., the secret significance of the syllable *Om*; (2) 'secret word', certain expressions and formulæ which are intelligible only to the initiated, as *taṭṭalen*, 'in him growing, passing away, breathing', or *satyasya satyam*, 'the truth of truth', as designation of the highest being; (3) 'secret text', i.e., 'esoteric doctrine' and 'secret knowledge', cf. Deussen, *loc. cit.*, pp. 16 f.

According to this original meaning of the word 'Upaniṣad' the oldest Upaniṣads already contain very heterogeneous matters. An Upaniṣad was above all else a 'mystery', and every doctrine which was not intended for the masses, but was only communicated within a narrow circle of privileged persons—be it a profound philosophical doctrine or some futile symbolism or allegory, a symbolical sacrifice serving as magic, puzzled out by a Brahman, or some would-be wisdom serving as a magic formula—was called Upaniṣad. All this we actually find already in the *old* Upaniṣads side by side and jumbled up but particularly so in the so-called *Atharvaveda-Upaniṣads*.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the *Kauṣītaki-Upaniṣad* contains, besides psychological and metaphysical expositions and a detailed eschatology,<sup>2</sup> also descriptions of sacrificial rites, by which one can attain some good or other, or effect a love charm, ceremonies for the prevention of the death of children, and even an 'Upaniṣad', i.e., a secret doctrine, the knowledge of which serves as magic for the annihilation of enemies. Similarly, the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* contains deep philosophical thoughts upon the creation, the universe and the soul, but among these also mystical speculations upon the syllable *Om*, secret rites for the healing of diseases and so on. In the *Atharvaveda-Upaniṣads*, indeed, we find for instance a whole Upaniṣad—the *Garuḍa-Upaniṣad*,<sup>3</sup>—which is nothing but a snake charm that might just as well be included in the *Atharvaveda-Saṃhitā*.

This should be borne in mind when a 'philosophy of the Upaniṣads' or even a 'system of the Upaniṣads' is spoken of. A philosophy of the Upaniṣads exists only in so far as, in these

<sup>1</sup> According to *Āśvalāyana-Gṛhyasūtra*, I, 13, 1, certain rites connected with conception, procreation of male children, etc., are taught in an 'Upaniṣad'. The charm in *Ṛv.*, I, 191 is called an 'Upaniṣad' by Kātyāyana in his *Sarvānukramanikā*. In the manual of politics (*Kauṣītīya-Arthasāstra*, XIV) all kinds of magic rites for the purpose of arson, assassination, blinding, etc., and in the manuals of erotics all sorts of secret prescriptions relating to sexual intercourse and to cosmetics are taught in an 'Upaniṣadic chapter' (see *Kauṣītīya-Arthasāstra*, XIV; *Vātsyāyana's Kāmasūtra*, VII; and R. Schmidt, *Beiträge zur indischen Erotik*, Leipzig, 1902, pp. 317 ff.). Rāmānuja (on *Bṛahmasūtra*, II, 2, 48, see SBE., Vol. 48, p. 528) calls the *Pāncarātraśāstra* 'a great Upaniṣad'.

<sup>2</sup> On this chapter of the *Kauṣītaki-Up.*, compared with another version of it in the *Jaiminiya-Bṛāhmaṇa*, see H. Windisch, *BSGW.*, 1907, 111 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Deussen, *Sehnig Upanishads des Veda*, pp. 627 f.

collections of all sorts of mysteries, the teachings of the philosophers were also included. A system of the Upaniṣad philosophy can only be said to exist in a very restricted sense.<sup>1</sup> For it is not the thoughts of one single philosopher or of one uniform school of philosophers, that might be traced back to one single teacher, which are before us in the Upaniṣads, but it is the teachings of various men,<sup>2</sup> even of various periods, which are presented in the single sections of the Upaniṣads.

There are, it is true, a few *fundamental doctrines*, which lend an appearance of uniformity to the philosophical thoughts which stand out in the genuine Upaniṣads, and it is only of these that we wish to speak here: with respect to these *fundamental doctrines* alone is it possible to speak (as Deussen does)—though always with reserve—of a ‘system of the Upaniṣads’. We must, therefore, not seek deep wisdom in every chapter of the Upaniṣads, or expect a Platonic dialogue in every Upaniṣad. It is indeed remarkable enough that in the very oldest and most beautiful portions of the Upaniṣads we find the same form of *dialogue* as in the works of the great Greek philosopher.<sup>3</sup> And just as Plato’s dialogues reveal to us a wonderfully life-like picture of the life and doings of the Ancient Greeks, so the dialogues of the older Upaniṣads frequently afford us a surprising insight into life at the ancient Indian princely courts, where priests and famous wandering teachers, including learned women, flocked together, in order to hold their disputations before the king, who not infrequently entered into the theological

<sup>1</sup> “That the Upaniṣads teach not one but various systems, must follow from the fact that they are compilations just as the *Rgveda-Saṃhitā* is,” R. G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, etc.*, p. 1. Cf. G. Thibaut, *SFE.*, Vol. 34, pp. ci ff.

<sup>2</sup> How far the persons mentioned by name in the Upaniṣads, such as Yājñavalkya, Śaṅḍilya, Bālāki, Svetaketu and others, were really the teachers of the doctrines ascribed to them (as Barua in his ‘*Pre-Buddhist Indian Philosophy*’ takes them to be), is not quite certain. Yājñavalkya is said to be the author of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Up.*, as of the whole *White Yajurveda* (see *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Up.*, VI, 5. 3 and *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti*, III, 110); but in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Up.* itself other teachers also are mentioned. Besides, so many different doctrines both of ritual and of metaphysics are ascribed to Yājñavalkya, that it seems difficult to credit him with all of them. On the other hand it is quite possible that Śaṅḍilya for instance was really the teacher of the famous doctrine ascribed to him.

<sup>3</sup> On the dialogues of the Upaniṣads, cf. Oldenberg, *Die Lehre der Upanishaden*, pp. 180 ff.

and philosophical conversations and confounded the learned Brahmins by his knowledge; as well as insight into the school-life of those ancient times, when travelling scholars undertook long journeys in order to 'hear' some famous teacher, to whom pupils came from all sides 'as waters precipitate themselves into the abyss and months sink into the year'.<sup>1</sup> But besides sections of deep philosophical content, and portions which very well bear comparison with Plato's dialogues, we also find in the Upanishads much that is inferior as philosophy or literature.

### THE FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF THE UPANISHADS<sup>2</sup>

That which is of the greatest value in the Upanishads is those fundamental thoughts, on the basis of which we can speak of a 'philosophy of the Upanishads', above all, the fundamental doctrine which pervades all the genuine Upanishads, and which can be summed up in the sentence: "*The universe is the Brahman, but the Brahman is the Ātman*", which in our mode of philosophical expression would be equal to: "The world is God, and God is my soul".

(The entire thought of the Upanishad philosophers revolves around the two conceptions of *Brahman* and *Ātman*; and it is necessary to get a clear idea of these conceptions, in order to be able to understand the philosophy of the Upanishads. The etymology of the word '*Brahman*' is doubtful.<sup>3</sup> If we turn

<sup>1</sup> *Taittiriya-Up.*, I, 8.

<sup>2</sup> See A. E. Gough, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, London, 1882; P. Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*. Authorised English Translation by A. S. Geden, Edinburgh, 1919 (from AGPh., I, 2); G. Thibaut, SBE., Vol. 34, pp. cxv ff.; P. Oltremare *L'histoire des idées théosophiques dans l'Inde*, t. I, Paris, 1906, pp. 63 ff.; H. Jacobi KRE., II, p. 801; H. Oldenberg, *Die Lehre der Upanishaden und die Anfänge der Buddhismus*, Göttingen, 1915; B. Barua, *A History of Pre-Buddhist Indian Philosophy*, Calcutta, 1921; R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, Introduction; S. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, I, Cambridge, 1922, pp. 28 ff.; S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, I, London, 1923, pp. 187 ff.

<sup>3</sup> The most probable etymology is that suggested by H. Osthoff (Bez. Beitr., 24, 1899, 118 ff.) who connects *brahman* with Old Irish *bricht*, 'magic, magic formula'. Oldenberg (*Lehre der Upanishaden*, pp. 44 ff., and 'Zur Geschichte des Wortes *brahman*', NGGW., 1916, pp. 715 ff.) and Hillebrandt (KRE., II, pp. 796 ff.) have also accepted this etymology. An older etymology is that from the root *brh* 'to grow' (M. Haug). Hillebrandt and Dasgupta *loc. cit.*, p. 36) follow M. Haug in explaining *brahman* as 'the



to the St. Petersburg Sanskrit Dictionary we find 'Brahman' explained as "the devotion which appears as the craving and fulness of the soul", and strives after the gods, while according to Deussen,<sup>1</sup> the Brahman is supposed to be "the will of man, striving upwards to that which is sacred and divine". These explanations may correspond to Jewish-Christian ideas of divinity, but are diametrically opposed to the *Indian* conception of the relationship between gods and men, as we know it in the *Samhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas*.<sup>2</sup> What the word signifies etymologically is not certain. But in the Veda itself 'Brahman' occurs countless times in the meaning of 'prayer' or 'magic formula'; there is nowhere any thought of devotion or exaltation to the divine, but it always means mere formulae and verses containing secret magic power, by which man desires to influence divine beings, or to obtain, or even to force something from them. When a later period united these magic formulae and prayers in 'books' or school texts as the three Vedas these were called *trayī vidyā* or 'threefold knowledge', also briefly 'the Brahman'. But as divine origin was ascribed to this Veda or Brahman—the two words being used with exactly the same meaning—and as the sacrifice, which, as we have seen, was itself conceived as a superhuman, nay superdivine power, was, according to the Indian view, derived from the Veda or contained in the Veda,<sup>3</sup> so at last this Brahman or sacred knowledge, came to be called the first created thing (*brahma prathamajam*), and finally even to be made into the creative principle, the cause of all existence (*brahma svayambhu*). Thus the Brahman as divine principle is a conception of the

magical force which is derived from the orderly co-operation of the hymns, the chants, and the sacrificial gifts." J. Hertel (*Das Brahman* in Indogerman. Forschungen, 41, 1923, pp. 185 ff.) connects *brahman* etymologically with Greek *phlegma*, Latin *flagro*, and tries to prove that the original meaning of *brahman* was 'fire', viz., both the internal fire in man and the cosmic fire. I, however, am not convinced by his arguments.

<sup>1</sup> *System des Vedanta*, p. 128. AGPh., 1, 1, pp. 241 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. above, pp. 68 f., 200 f., 221.

<sup>3</sup> Sat., V, 5, 5, 10; "The whole sacrifice is as great as the three-fold Veda." According to *Chāndogya-Up.*, VII, 4, 1, "the sacrificial acts are contained in the mantras (i.e., in the Veda)."

priestly philosophy, and quite explicable in the light of the brahmanical views upon prayer and sacrifice.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the word 'Ātman' is simpler. The etymology of this word, too, is uncertain. Some derive it from the root *-an* 'to breath' (German 'atman') and explain it as 'exhalation, breath, soul, self'. Others, like Deussen,<sup>2</sup> derive it from two pronominal roots, so that it would originally mean 'This I'. However that may be, Ātman is not only a philosophical conception, but a word which frequently occurs in Sanskrit, and whose meaning is perfectly clear. It signifies 'self', is often used as a reflexive pronoun, and as a substantive denotes one's own person, one's own body in contrast to the outside world, sometimes the trunk in contrast to the limbs, but most frequently the *soul*, the true *self*, in contrast to the *body*.<sup>3</sup>

These two conceptions Brahman and Ātman have become united in the philosophy of Upaniṣads. Thus the famous *doctrine of Sāṇḍilya* begins with the words: 'Truly, this All is Brahman', and ends, after a description of the Ātman, with the statement that Brahman and Ātman are one:

"This my Ātman in my inmost heart is smaller than a grain of rice, or a barley-corn, or a mustard seed, or a millet grain . . . This my Ātman, in my inmost heart is greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than the heavens, greater than all spheres. In him are all actions, all wishes, all smells, all tastes; he holds this. All enclosed within himself; he speaks not, he troubles about nothing;—*this my Ātman in my inmost heart is this Brahman*. With him, when I depart out of this life,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, pp. 224 f. A. Weber already has compared Brahman with the logos-idea in Neo-Platonism and in Christianity. Thus also Deussen, *System des Vedanta*, p. 51 and Max F. Hecker, *Schopenhauer und die indische Philosophie* (Cologne, 1897), p. 8. Deussen desires to bring Brahman into accord with the 'will' of Schopenhauer, but, as Hecker (p. 82) mildly expresses it, is forced 'to offer some violence to the conception of Brahman'. A comparison which is more justifiable is that with the 'mana' of the Melanesians, which has been emphasised by N. Söderblom, in his *Das Werden des Götterglaubens*, 1916, pp. 270 ff.

<sup>2</sup> AGPh., I, 1, p. 285.

<sup>3</sup> On the term Ātman see Deussen, ERE., II, 195 ff.; Jacobi, ERE., II, 801; Diogenes, *History of Indian Philosophy*, I, 25 f. According to Deussen, Ātman is "the most abstract, and therefore the best name which philosophy has found for its sole and eternal theme". "Schopenhauer named his white poodle 'Ātman', whereby, following the Vedantic doctrine, he desired to acknowledge the inner being as equal in man and beast". (Hecker, *loc. cit.*, p. 8.)

*shall I be united. For he to whom this knowledge has come, for him, indeed, there exists no doubt. Thus spake Sāṇḍilya yea Sāṇḍilya."*<sup>1</sup>

Deussen expresses this fundamental idea of the Upaniṣads briefly and pertinently in the words: "The *Brahman*, the power which presents itself to us materialised in all existing things, which creates, sustains, preserves, and receives back into itself again all worlds, this eternal infinite divine power is identical with the *Ātman*, with that which, after stripping off everything external, we discover in ourselves as our real most essential being, our individual self, the soul."<sup>2</sup> This doctrine has found expression most pointedly and clearly in the Upaniṣad dictum which later became the confession of faith of millions of ~~Indians~~, in the '*tat tvam asi*' (so often quoted by Schopenhauer), 'that art thou', i.e., the universe and the Brahman, that art thou thyself, or in other words: The world exists only in so far as thou thyself art conscious of it. Let us hear in what manner the poet-philosophers of the Upaniṣads endeavour to make clear this doctrine of the unity of the world with the Brahman and of the Brahman with the *Ātman*:<sup>3</sup>

"Svetaketu was the son of Uddālaka Āruṇi. To him said his father: 'Svetaketu, betake thyself as a Veda-student to a teacher. For, my dear one, in our family it is not customary to be a Brahmin in name only, without having learnt the Veda. So at the age of twelve years he was initiated as a pupil. And at twenty-four years of age, after he had learnt everything in all the Vedas he came home—proud, haughty, and regarding himself as a learned man. Then said his father to him: 'As thou art now, my dear Svetaketu, so proud and haughty, and regardest thyself as a learned man, tell me, hast thou also inquired into that doctrine by which that which is unheard becomes heard, that which is unthought becomes thought, that which is unknown becomes known?' 'Venerable one, of what does this doctrine consists?' 'Just as, my dear one, through *one* lump of clay everything that is of clay is known and the difference lies only in the word, is merely a name—but in truth it is clay—; and just as, my dear one, through *one* copper trinket everything which is of copper is known and the difference lies only in the word, is merely a name—

<sup>1</sup> *Chāndogya-Up.*, III, 14. Cf. above, p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣad*, translated by A. S. Geden, Edinburgh, 1906, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> *Chāndogya-Up.*, VI, 1 ff.

but in truth it is copper—; and just as, my dear one, through *one* pair of nail scissors everything which is of iron is known and the difference lies only in the word, is merely a name—but in truth it is iron—; so, my dear one, it is with this doctrine.' 'Surely my honourable teachers did not know this; for if they had known it, why should they not have told it to me? Then, venerable one, do thou expound it to me.' 'Very well, my dear one,' said his father.

'Only the *existent*, my dear one, was here in the beginning, and this only as One without a Second. To be sure, some people have said: Only the non-existent was here in the beginning, and this only as One without a Second, and out of this non-existent arose the existent. But how, my dear one, could this be so? How could the existent arise out of the non-existent? Only the existent, my dear one, was here in the beginning, and this only as One without a Second!' (He then demonstrates further, how this *existent* had created heat, which had created water, which, in its turn, had created food; and how the existent, penetrating those three elements, developed the material world out of itself. In the phenomena of sleep, of hunger and of thirst, he then explains how everything leads back to the three elements, heat, water, food—or, as we would say: fire, water, earth—while these three elements in their turn rest only upon the existent. But as this *existent* has, with the *Ātman*, its soul, penetrated into all beings, so it is also the soul in us. When, therefore, a man dies, he becomes again that which he originally was; he unites again with the existent, out of which he was produced. Now follow a number of similes which are all intended to illustrate the doctrine of the oneness of the world with the Alone-existing and the human soul.) 'As, my dear one, the bees, when they are preparing honey, collect the juices of the most diverse trees and then combine the juice in one unity;—as in this unity those juices do not retain any difference, so that they could say: I am the juice of this tree, I am the juice of that tree—so, my dear one, all these creatures here, when they have become absorbed in the *existent* have no consciousness of the fact that they have become absorbed in the existent. Whatever they may be here, whether tiger or lion, wolf or boar, worm or bird, fly or gnat,—*this* (namely, the *existent*) they become. And it is this very minute thing which constitutes the being of the All, that is the truth, that is the *Ātman*, *that art thou*, O Svetaketu.' 'Venerable one, instruct me yet further.' 'Very well, my dear one. . . .'

'Fetch me a fruit from yonder fig-tree!' 'Here it is, venerable one.' 'Split it.' 'It is split, venerable one.' 'What dost thou see therein?' 'Very tiny grains, venerable one!' 'Split one of these!' 'It is split.' 'What seest thou therein?' 'Nothing, venerable one.' Then said the father to him: 'My dear one, it is as result of that very quintessence which thou dost not perceive, that this big fig-tree stands here. Believe me, my dear one, it is this very minute thing which constitutes

the being of the All, that is the truth, that is the Ātman, *that art thou, O Svetaketu!* 'Venerable one, instruct me yet further.' 'Very well, my dear one.'

'Place this piece of salt in water and come to me again to-morrow morning.' He did so. Then his father said to him: 'Bring me the salt which thou didst place in water last night.' He felt for it, but did not find it; it had vanished. 'Just taste the water from one side. How does it taste?' 'Salty.' 'Taste from the middle. How does it taste?' 'Salty.' 'Taste from the other side. How does it taste?' 'Salty.' 'Eat something with it and then return to me.' He did so, but the salty taste still remained. Then his father said to him: 'Truly, my dear son, here also (in the body) thou dost not perceive the *existent*, and yet it is there. And this very minute thing it is which constitutes the being of the All, that is the truth, that is the Ātman, *that art thou, O Svetaketu!*'

What inspires us with the highest respect for these ancient thinkers of India is the earnestness and the enthusiasm with which they endeavoured to fathom the divine principle, or what Kant would call the thing-in-itself whether they called it 'the one' or 'the existent', Brahman or Ātman. Thus we read in a dialogue, which recurs in two Upaniṣads in two different versions,<sup>1</sup> how Gārgya Bālāki, a proud and learned Brahman, comes to Ajātaśatru, the King of Benares, and pledges himself to explain the Brahman to him. One after another he explains the Puruṣa, *i.e.*, the personal spirit, in the sun, in the moon, in the lightning, in the ether, in the wind, in the fire, in the water, then the spirit which appears as a reflected image or shadow, in the echo, in sound, in dreams, in the human body, or in the eye, as the Brahman. Ajātaśatru, however, is not satisfied with any of these explanations, so that finally, the learned Brahman himself goes for instruction to the king, who then explains to him that the true Brahman is to be sought only in the *intelligent spirit* (Puruṣa) in man, *i.e.*, in the Ātman, in the self. "As a spider spins her web out of herself, as out of a fire the little sparks fly in all directions, so out of this Ātman emanate all vital breaths, all worlds, all gods and all beings."

Similarly, in a famous Upaniṣad passage, the difference between the true and the false Ātman is shown. There we read :

“ ‘ The Ātman, from which all evil has fled, which is free from old age, free from death and free from care, which is without hunger and without thirst, whose wishes are the true, whose intentions are the true, that Ātman should one investigate, that Ātman should one endeavour to know: he who has found and known this Ātman, attains to all worlds and the fulfilment of all wishes.’ Thus spake Prajāpati. This was heard by the gods, as well as the demons, and they said: ‘ It is well, we will investigate this Ātman—the Ātman, through the investigation of which one obtains all worlds and the fulfilment of all desires.’ From among the gods, Indra arose, and from among the demons Virocana arose, and both, without having communicated with each other, came to Prajāpati with firewood in their hands.<sup>1</sup> They stayed with him as pupils for thirty-two years. Then said Prajāpati to them: ‘ What is your desire in living here as pupils?’ and they said: ‘ The Ātman, from which all evil has fled, which is free from old age, free from death and free from care, which is without hunger and without thirst, whose wishes are the true, whose intentions are the true, that Ātman shall one endeavour to know: he who has found and known this Ātman, gains all worlds and the fulfilment of all desires. This thy speech, venerable one, we have heard. Our desire is for this Ātman; therefore we have lived with thee here as pupils. (Prajāpati now first explains to them that the Puruṣa in the eye or in the reflected image is the Ātman. Virocana is satisfied with this, returns to the demons and proclaims to them the doctrine that the body is the Ātman, and that one has only to please and care for the body in order to obtain all worlds. Indra, however, soon understands that the explanation given by Prajāpati cannot have been meant seriously. Dissatisfied he returns and again stays with Prajāpati as his pupil for thirty-two years.) Then the latter said to him: ‘ He (the spirit) who roams about blithely in dreams,<sup>2</sup> he is the Ātman, that is the Immortal, the dangerless, that is

<sup>1</sup> The pupil has to live with the teacher and serve him, and especially tend the sacred fire. ‘ To come with wood in one’s hand ’ therefore means ‘ to go to someone as a pupil for instruction ’.

<sup>2</sup> As in the Upaniṣads the development of the Ātman conception is traced to the true Ātman through the preliminary steps of the puruṣa in the eye, in the reflected image, in the shadow and in the dream-picture, to which the prāṇa or breath of life is often added, so we find in remarkable agreement also among the primitive races, the breath, the ‘ little dweller in the eye ’, the reflected image, the shadow, and visions, as preliminary steps to the belief in a soul. (Cf. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, London, 1903, I, pp. 430 ff. Fritz Schultze, *Psychologie der Naturvölker*, Leipzig, 1900, pp. 254 ff.)

the Brahman.' Then Indra departed thence with a quiet heart." (But even before he had reached the gods he comprehended that the vision in dream could not be the true Ātman, either. Once again he returns to Prajāpati and stays with him as a pupil for thirty-two years. Now Prajāpati declares the soul in dreamless, profound sleep to be the true Ātman. With that also Indra is not satisfied, he returns, and Prajāpati suffers him to live with him for another five years, when at last he reveals to him the doctrine of the true Ātman.) 'O Indra, mortal indeed is this body, of which death takes possession. It is the dwelling-place of that immortal, incorporeal Ātman. Possessed by pleasure and pain is the (Ātman) which is united with the body, for so long as he is united with the body, there is no defence for him against pleasure and pain. But when he is incorporeal, then certainly pleasure and pain do not touch him. . . . Now when the eye is directed to yonder ether, then *he* is the spirit (Puruṣa) in the eye, but ~~the~~ eye serves only for seeing. And it is the Ātman who *knows*: "this I will smell"; the organ of smell serves only for smelling. And it is the Ātman who *knows*: "this will I speak"; the voice serves only for speaking. And it is the Ātman who *knows*; "this will I hear"; the organ of hearing serves only for hearing. And it is the Ātman who *knows*: "this will I think"; the organ of thought is his divine eye. He it is who is pleased when, with the organ of thought, this divine eye, he sees the objects of his desires. *Him*, indeed, *this* Ātman, do the gods worship in the Brahman-world; therefore do they possess all worlds and all their desires are fulfilled. And he obtains all worlds and the fulfilment of all desires, who has found and recognises this Ātman.' Thus spake Prajāpati, so spake Prajāpati."<sup>1</sup>

Thus here again the true Ātman is explained as the knowing and intelligent spirit in man. But the doctrine that this Ātman is one with the universe and that everything exists only in so far as it is in the cognitive self, is taught by the beautiful conversation between Yājñavalkya and Maitreyī. Yājñavalkya is about to leave home in order to conclude his life as a hermit in the forest. So he wishes to make a settlement between his two wives, and tells this to the one, Maitreyī.

"Maitreyī said: 'My Lord, if this whole earth, full of wealth, belonged to me, tell me, should I be immortal by it?'

'No', replied Yājñavalkya; 'like the life of rich people will be thy life. But there is no hope of immortality by wealth.'

And Maitreyī said: 'What should I do with that by which I do not become immortal? What my Lord knoweth (of immortality), tell that to me.'

Yājñavalkya replied: 'Thou who art truly dear to me, thou speakest dear words. Come, sit down, I will explain it to thee, and mark well what I say.'

And he said: 'Verily, a husband is not dear, that you may love the husband; but that you may love the Self, therefore a husband is dear.

' Verily, a wife is not dear, that you may love the wife; but that you may love the Self, therefore a wife is dear.

' Verily, sons are not dear, that you may love the sons; but that you may love the Self, therefore sons are dear. . . .

' Verily, the Devas are not dear, that you may love the Devas; but that you may love the Self, therefore the Devas are dear.

' Verily, creatures are not dear, that you may love the creatures; but that you may love the Self, therefore are creatures dear.

' Verily, everything is not dear that you may love everything; but that you may love the Self, therefore everything is dear.

' Verily, the Self is to be seen, to be heard, to be perceived, to be marked, O Maitreyī! Then we see, hear, perceive, and know the Self, then all this is known'!''<sup>1</sup>

One of the most frequent appellations of the Ātman in the Upaniṣads is the word 'prāṇa,' *i.e.*, 'breath of life, life, life-principle'. And numerous portions of the Upaniṣads deal with this Prāṇa, which is one with the intelligent self; or with the relations of the same to the organs of the soul, the so-called Prāṇas (prāṇāḥ, plural of prāṇa). These organs—speech, breath, sight, hearing and the organ of thought—correspond to five forces of Nature in the universe: fire, wind, the sun, the quarters of heaven and the moon. And the Upaniṣads often talk of the reciprocal action between the organs and the forces of Nature. That is to a certain extent the psychology, which indeed cannot be separated from the metaphysics, of the Upaniṣads. The oft-related 'psychological fable' of the dispute of the vital organs about rank, is very popular. It is there told how the Prāṇas, or vital organs, once fought for precedence. They went to the father Prajāpati, that he might settle their dispute.

<sup>1</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Up.*, II, 4. Translated by Max Müller, SBE., Vol. 15, pp. 108-10.



“ He said to them: \ That one of you after whose going off the body appears as if it were the very worst off—he is the most superior of you.’

6. Speech went off. Having remained away a year, it came around again, and said: ‘How have you been able to live without me?’

‘As the dumb, not speaking, but breathing with the breath, seeing with the eye, hearing with the ear, thinking with the mind. Thus.’

Speech entered in.

9. The Eye went off. Having remained away a year, it came around again, and said: ‘How have you been able to live without me?’

‘As the blind, not seeing, but breathing with the breath, speaking with speech, hearing with the ear, thinking with the mind. Thus.’

The Eye entered in.

10. The Ear went off. Having remained away a year, it came around again, and said: ‘How have you been able to live without me?’

‘As the deaf, not hearing, but breathing with the breath, speaking with speech, seeing with the eye, thinking with the mind. Thus.’

The Ear entered in.

11. The Mind went off. Having remained away a year, it came around again, and said: ‘How have you been able to live without me?’

‘As simpletons, mindless, but breathing with the breath, speaking with speech, seeing with the eye, hearing with the ear, Thus.’

The Mind entered in.

12. Now when the Breath was about to go off—as a fine horse might tear out the pegs of his foot-tethers all together, thus did it tear out the other Breaths all together. They all came to it, and said: ‘Sir! Remain. You are the most superior of us. Do not go off.’

15. Verily, they do not call them ‘Speeches,’ nor ‘Eyes,’ nor ‘Ears,’ nor ‘Minds.’ They call them ‘Breaths’ (prāṇa), for the vital breath is all these.”<sup>1</sup>

Just as the doctrine of the Prāṇa and the Prāṇas is connected with the fundamental doctrine of the Ātman, the same doctrine also affords the poet-philosophers of the Upaniṣads a motive for magnificent philosophical poems, as they can best be called, on the fortunes of the individual Ātman, *i.e.*, the human soul, in the conditions of waking and of dreaming, of sleep and of death, and in its wanderings in the Beyond up to its final ‘emancipation’, *i.e.*, its complete absorption in the Brahman. Thus, above all, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*

<sup>1</sup> *Chāndogya-Up.*, V. 1. Translated by R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads*, pp. 227 f. Cf. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Up.*, VI. 1, 7-14.

(IV, 3-4) sketches a picture of the fortunes of the soul, which, as Deussen<sup>1</sup> rightly remarks, "for richness and warmth of expression surely stands alone in Indian literature, and perhaps in the literature of all nations." Here we find also the doctrine of the *transmigration of souls*, and in the closest connection with it, developed clearly and distinctly for the first time, the *ethical* doctrine of *Karman*, *action*, which, with the unerringness of a law of Nature, must have its consequences. This great doctrine of *action*, which was later, especially in Buddhism, preached in every street and by-way, is still a great mystery in the Upanishads. Ārtaḥhāga asks Yājñavalkya :

“ ‘ Yājñavalkya,’ said he, ‘ when after the death of this man here his voice enters into the fire, his breath into the wind, his sight into the sun, his organ of thought into the moon, his hearing into the quarters of heaven, his body into the earth, his soul (Ātman) into the ether, the hairs of his body into the herbs, the hairs of his head into the trees, and his blood and seed are laid down in the water,—where then is this man?’ ‘ Take me by the hand, my dear one!’ said Yājñavalkya. ‘ Ārtaḥhāga, let us two only know of this; let this discussion of ours not be in public.’ And the two went out and discussed together; and it was *Action* of which they spoke; it was *Action* which they praised. Verily, he becomes good through good action, bad through bad action.”<sup>2</sup>

This doctrine is then treated in a more detailed manner along with the magnificent description of the departure of the soul out of the body. It says there :

“ The point of his heart begins to shine, and by this light the Ātman departs, be it out of the eye or out of the head, or out of other parts of the body. And while he is departing the breath of life (prāṇa) follows him; and behind the departing breath of life depart all the vital organs, the consciousness also follows them. But he, the cognitive one (the Ātman) is endowed with cognition. Knowledge and the actions, the experiences of the former life, remain attached to him. Just as a grass—leech,<sup>3</sup> when it has arrived at the end of a blade of grass, making another start (for another blade), draws itself together towards (this blade), so man, when he has stripped off his body and has rid himself of non-

<sup>1</sup> *Seichsig Upanishads*, p. 463.

<sup>2</sup> *Bṛhadaranyaka-Up.*, III, 2, 18 f.

<sup>3</sup> See Barua, *Pre-Buddhist Indian Philosophy*, p. 175.

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... making another start (for another body), draws himself together towards (that other body). Just as an embroideress undoes a small portion of a piece of embroidery, and out of it creates a different, quite new and more beautiful design, so man, when he has stripped off his body and has rid himself of non-knowledge, creates for himself a different, quite new and more beautiful form, that of the spirit of an ancestor or of a Gandharva, of a Brahman or of a Prajāpati, of a god or of a man, or that of some other being. . . . As he has acted, as he has lived, so he becomes; he who has done good, is born again as a good one, he who has done evil, is born again as an evil one. He becomes good through good action, bad through bad action. Therefore it is said: 'Man here is formed entirely out of desire, and according to his desire is his resolve, and according to his resolve he performs the action, and according to the performance of the action is his destiny'."<sup>1</sup>

"In consequence of this doctrine of Karman the moral element plays a far greater part in the Upaniṣads than in the Brāhmaṇas. Moreover, we should not ignore the fact that the metaphysical doctrine of the Ātman, for whose sake we love our fellow-creatures' involves a deep ethical idea: as it is in reality the universal soul which we love in each individual, love for all creatures wells up from the recognition of the Ātman."<sup>2</sup> However, in the Upaniṣads, too, there is not much room left for actual moral teaching. Comparatively rarely do we meet with moral precepts, such as for example in the *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* (I, 11) the teacher gives the scholar who is departing on his life's journey:

"Speak the truth, do thy duty, neglect not the study of the Veda. After thou hast brought thy teacher the agreeable gift (after completion of the period of training) see that the thread of thy race does not break off. . . . Neglect not the ceremonies for the gods and Fathers. A god be to thee thy mother, a god be to thee thy father, a god be to thee thy teacher, a god be to thee the guest," and so on.

<sup>1</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Up.*, IV, 4, 2-5.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 217 f.

<sup>3</sup> On the ethics of the Upaniṣads, see Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, pp. 58 ff. John Mackenzie, *Hindu Ethics*, London, 1922, pp. 67 ff.; S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, I, pp. 207 ff. E. W. Hopkins, *Ethics of India*, New Haven, 1924, pp. 68 ff.

There is another passage referring to ethics which we find in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* (V, 2) which is more interesting and much more Upaniṣad-like than these moral precepts :

“ Three kinds of sons of Prajāpati, the gods, human beings, and the demons, sojourned with their father Prajāpati as pupils. After the gods had sojourned there as pupils, they said : ‘ Tell us something, O master !’ And he uttered the syllable ‘ *da* ’ and said : ‘ Did you understand that ?’ ‘ We understood it,’ they said : ‘ thou didst say to us *dāmyata* (restrain yourselves).’ ‘ Yes,’ said he ; ‘ you understood it.’ Then the human beings said to him : ‘ Tell us something, O master !’ And he uttered the same syllable ‘ *da* ’ and said : ‘ Did you understand that ?’ ‘ We understood it,’ they said, ‘ thou didst say to us : *datta* (give).’ ‘ Yes,’ said he, ‘ you understood it.’ Then the demons said to him : ‘ Tell us something, O master !’ And he uttered to them the same syllable ‘ *da* ’ and said : ‘ Did you understand that ?’ ‘ We understood it,’ they said, ‘ thou didst say to us ‘ *dayadhvam* (have pity).’ ‘ Yes,’ said he, ‘ you understood it.’ And it is just this which yonder divine voice, the thunder, proclaims : da-da-da, that means *dāmyata*, *datta*, *dayadhvam*. Therefore shall he learn these three things : self-restraint, generosity and pity.”

It is easy enough to see why we meet but seldom with such ethical doctrines in the Upaniṣads. According to the doctrine of the Upaniṣads the highest object to be aimed at is union with the Brahman, and this union can be attained only by giving up non-knowledge, by *cognition*. Only he who has *recognised* the oneness of the soul with the Divine will obtain deliverance, i.e., complete union with the Brahman. But in order to attain this highest object it is necessary to give up all works, good as well as bad. For sacrifices and pious works only lead to new re-births, *knowledge* alone leads from this maze to the One and Eternally True. “As no water remains attached to the leaf of the lotus blossom, so no bad deed remains attached to him who knows this.” Already in the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Āraṇyakas* there is repeated mention of the advantages which accrue to him who knows some secret doctrine or other of sacrificial science,—‘ who knows this’. Nothing is more characteristic of the Upaniṣads, however, than the ever-recurring promise of happiness and blessed-

ness, of earthly possessions and heavenly joys as a reward for him 'who knows this'. The idea that knowledge is not only power, but the highest object to be aimed at, is traceable throughout all the Upaniṣads. Not only Indra serves Prajāpati for 101 years as a pupil, but it is also often reported that human beings serve a teacher for years as pupils in order to receive from him the transmission of some knowledge or other. Kings are prepared to present thousands of cows and piles of gold to the Brahman who can proclaim to them the doctrine of the true Ātman or Brahman. But Brahmans also humble themselves before kings, rich people before beggars, when these, as is not seldom the case, are in possession of higher wisdom.<sup>1</sup> This yearning for knowledge has found its most touching expression in the beautiful poem of *Naciketas*, which we find in the *Kāthaka-Upaniṣad*.

The youth Naciketas has descended into the lower world and the god of death has vouchsafed him three wishes. Naciketas wishes, firstly, that he may return alive to his father, secondly he wishes for heavenly bliss. When he is to express his third wish he says :

" This doubt that there is in regard to a man deceased :  
 ' He exists,' say some; ' He exists not,' say others--  
 ' This would I know, instructed by thee!  
 Of the boons this is boon the third."

Thereupon Yama replies that this question of what happens to man after death, is so difficult to investigate that even the gods were once in doubt about it, and he begs the youth to give up his wish.

" Choose centenarian sons and grandsons,  
 Many cattle, elephants, gold and horses.  
 Choose a great abode of earth.  
 And thyself live as many autumns as thou desirest.  
 This, if thou thinkest an equal boon,  
 Choose—wealth and long life!  
 A great one on earth, O Naciketas, be thou.  
 The enjoyer of thy desires I make thee.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, pp. 108 ff.

Whate'er desires are hard to get in mortal world—  
 For all desires at pleasure make request.  
 These lovely maidens with chariots, with lyres—  
 Such (maidens), indeed, are not obtainable by men—  
 By these, from me bestowed, be waited on!  
 O Naciketas, question me not regarding dying (maraṇa)!"

Naciketas, however, will not be deterred from his wish by these promises of earthly possessions :

" Ephemeral things! That which is a mortal's, O End-maker,  
 Even the vigor (tejas) of all the powers, they wear away.  
 Even a whole life is slight indeed.  
 Thine be the vehicles (vāha)! Thine be the dance and song!  
 Not with wealth is a man to be satisfied.  
 Shall we take wealth, if we have seen thee?  
 Shall we live so long as thou shalt rule?  
 —This, in truth, is the boon to be chosen by me. . . .  
 This thing whereon they doubt, O Death:  
 What there is in the great passing-on—tell us that!  
 This boon, that has entered into the hidden—  
 No other than that does Naciketas choose."

Then Yama, the god of death, praises Naciketas for having chosen knowledge and not pleasures, and at last imparts to him the doctrine of the immortality of the Ātman.<sup>1</sup>

But how this high esteem of knowledge leads not only to the disregard of earthly pleasures, but to *contempt of the world* altogether,<sup>2</sup> is shown us by another Upaniṣad, in which for the first time that pessimistic trait of Indian thought appears, which we will meet with again and again in the later Indian literature. There we read.<sup>3</sup>

" A king named Bṛhadratha, after having installed his eldest son on the throne, thinking that his body is non-eternal, turned to renunciation

<sup>1</sup> The above verses (*Kāthaka-Up.*, I, 20, 22-25, 26, 27, 29) are given in the translation of Hume, *Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, pp. 344 f. A fine poetical, but very free translation of the legend is given by J. Muir, *Metrical Translations from Sanskrit Writers*, pp. 54 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. P. Regnaud, *Le Pessimisme Brahmanique* ('Annales du Musée Guimet', t. I, pp. 101 ff.)

<sup>3</sup> *Maitrīyana-Up.*, I, 2-4.

and went forth into the forest. There he gave himself up to the severest mortification, standing with arms stretched upwards and gazing into the sun. After one thousand days had elapsed there approached him . . . . the Ātman-knowing, venerable Śākāyanya. 'Stand up, stand up and choose a wish!' thus spake he to the king. He made his obeisance to him and said: 'O venerable one! I am not cognizant of the Ātman. Thou knowest his nature, as we have heard; mayest thou explain this to us!' (The Brahman desires to dissuade him from this wish and invites him to wish for something else. Then the king bursts forth into the words:) 'O venerable one! In this evil-smelling, pithless body, composed of bones, skin, sinews, marrow, flesh, seed, blood, mucus, tears, gum of the eyes, faeces, urine, bile and phlegm,—how can one possibly enjoy pleasure! In this body burdened with passion, anger, desire, delusion, fear, cowardice, envy, separation from that which is beloved, attachment to that which is not beloved, hunger, thirst, age, death, disease, trouble and such like,—how can one possibly enjoy pleasure! We see also that this whole world is transitory, just like these flies, mosquitoes, and such like, these herbs and trees, which rise and again decay.' (There then follows an enumeration of ancient kings and heroes who had to perish, also gods and demigods, who all fall victims to annihilation.) 'But what of these! There are yet other things,—drying-up of great seas, falling down of the mountains, swaying of the Pole Star . . . . sinking of the earth, the fall of the gods from their place,—in the course of a world in which such things happen, how indeed can one enjoy pleasure! When even he who is satiated with it, must return again and again! Therefore rescue me! For I feel in this world-cycle like the frog in a waterless well. Thou, O venerable one, art our refuge'.

It is noteworthy, however, that this passage, to which numerous parallels may be found in the Buddhist as well as in the later Sanskrit literature, belongs to one of the *latest* Upaniṣads. For the *Maitrāyana-Upaniṣad* is, in language and style, nearer to the classical Sanskrit literature than to the Veda and is decidedly post-Buddhist.<sup>1</sup> The old *Vedic* Upaniṣads contain but the germs of pessimism in the doctrine of the non-reality of the world. Only the Brahman is real, and this is the Ātman, the soul, "which passes beyond hunger and thirst, sorrow and delusion, old age and death". "That

<sup>1</sup> *Maitrāyana-Up.*, VII, 8 f., contains distinct allusions to the Buddhists as heretics. On the style of the *Maitrāyana-Up.*, s. Oldenberg, *Zur Geschichte der altindischen Prosa*, p. 38.

which is different from it is full of suffering"—*ato'nyad ārtam*.<sup>1</sup> But "that which is different from it", does not exist at all in reality, and therefore also the suffering and misery of the world are not real. The knowing one, who has comprehended the doctrine of the Unity, knows no fear, no pain. "He who knows the joy of the Brahman, for him there is no fear." "Where is delusion, where sorrow, for him who knows the Unity?" Joy (*ānanda*) is a name of the Brahman. "Consisting of joy (*ānandamaya*) is the *Ātman*. And like a song of triumph of optimism sound the words of an Upaniṣad: Joy is the Brahman. For truly, out of joy arise all these beings, by joy they live after they have arisen, and when they pass away they are again absorbed into joy."<sup>2</sup>

Thus the doctrine of the Upaniṣads is at bottom not pessimistic. Certainly it is only a small step from the belief in the non-reality of the world to contempt of the world. 'The more extravagantly the joy of the Brahman was praised, the vainer, the more worthless did earthly existence appear.' 'Therefore, after all, the pessimism of later Indian philosophy has its roots in the Upaniṣads.

In fact, the whole of the later philosophy of the Indians is rooted in the Upaniṣads. Their doctrines formed the foundation for the *Vedānta-Sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa, a work of which a later writer<sup>3</sup> says: "This text-book is the chief of all the text-books. All other text-books serve only as its complement. Therefore all who aim at deliverance, shall exalt it." The theological-philosophical systems of Śaṅkara and of Rāmānuja, whose adherents at the present day are still counted by millions, are built upon this text-book. Moreover, all other philosophical systems and religions which have arisen in the course of the centuries, the heretical Buddhism no less than the orthodox Brahmanical religion of the post-Buddhist period, have sprung forth from the soil of the Upaniṣad doctrines.

On the other hand, it proved fatal for the development of Indian philosophy that the Upaniṣads should have been pronounced

<sup>1</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Up.*, III, 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Taittiriya-Up.*, II, 9. III, 6; *Iśa-Up.*, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. M. F. Ecker, *Schopenhauer und die indische Philosophie*, pp. 116-20.

<sup>4</sup> Madhusūdana Śaṅkara in his *Prasthānabheda*.



to be ' revelations ', and sacred texts; for in the Upaniṣads we still find vigorous, independent, creative philosophical thought, which grew rarer and rarer in the later development of Indian philosophy for the very reason that progress was not only hindered at every step by the fetters of the dogmatism of the schools—which is the case in other lands as well as in India—but still more by the orthodox belief that every word of an Upaniṣad must be regarded as divine truth.

However, it was not the belief in their divine revelation which gave these philosophical poems (there is hardly a better name for them) such enormous power over the minds of men: for even the silliest hymns and the most stupid Brāhmaṇa passages were regarded as uttered by the deity: but it was rather the circumstance that, arrayed in the language of *poetry*, they appealed just as much to the heart as to the intellect. And it is not because, as Schopenhauer asserts, they present the ' fruit of the highest human knowledge and wisdom ', and contain ' almost superhuman conceptions ', ' whose originators can hardly be regarded as mere men ' that across the space of thousands of years the Upaniṣads *still* have much to tell *us also*; not because, as Deussen thinks, these thinkers have obtained, " if not the most scientific, yet still the most intimate and immediate light upon the last secret of existence ", and because (with which Deussen seeks to justify the belief of the Indians in revelation) in the Upaniṣads " there are philosophical conceptions unequalled in India or perhaps anywhere else in the world. " No, it is because these old thinkers *wrestle* so earnestly for the truth, because in their philosophical poems the eternally unsatisfied human yearning for knowledge has been expressed so fervently. The Upaniṣads do not contain ' superhuman conceptions ', but human, absolutely human attempts to come nearer to the truth—and it is this which makes them so valuable to us.

For the historian, however, who pursues the history of human thought, the Upaniṣads have a yet far greater significance:

<sup>1</sup> Hecker, *loc. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Deussen, *System des Vedanta*, pp. 50, 99 f. What exaggerations!

From the mystical doctrines of the Upaniṣads one current of thought may be traced to the mysticism of the Persian Sufism, to the mystic-theosophical logos-doctrine of the Neo-Platonics and the Alexandrian Christians down to the teachings of the Christian mystics Eckhart and Tauler, and finally to the philosophy of the great German mystic of the nineteenth century, Schopenhauer.<sup>1</sup> What Schopenhauer owed to the Indians he has himself told us often enough. He himself calls Plato, Kant and 'the Vedas' (by which Schopenhauer always means the Upaniṣads) his teachers. In his manuscript written for University lectures he wrote: "The results of that which I intend to present to you, agree with the oldest of all views of life, namely, the Vedas." He calls the opening up of Sanskrit literature 'the greatest gift of our century', and prophesies that Indian pantheism might become the popular belief in the Occident also. The agreement of his own system with that of the Upaniṣads appears to him absolutely marvellous, and he tells us "that each of the separate and detached sayings which constitute the Upaniṣads might be taken as a conclusion from the idea communicated by himself, although on the other hand the same is by no means to be found there already." It is well known that the Oupnek'hat used to lie open on his table and that before retiring to rest he performed his 'devotions' in it. And he says of this book: "It is the most satisfying and elevating reading (with the exception of the original text) which is possible in the world; it has been the solace of my life and will be the solace of my death."<sup>2</sup> The fundamental doctrine of the Upaniṣads, however, is the same which, according to Schopenhauer, "was at all times the ridicule of fools and the endless meditation of sages", namely, the *doctrine of Unity*, i.e., the doctrine "that all plurality is only apparent, that in all the individuals of this world, in whatever endless number they may present themselves after and beside one another, yet only one and the same, truly existing Being, present and identical in them all, manifests itself."<sup>3</sup> And if Ludwig Stein,

<sup>1</sup> On Schopenhauer as a mystic, s. Hecker, *loc. cit.*, pp. 85 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Parerga und Paralipomena*, published by J. Frauenstädt, II, p. 427 (§ 185). Hecker, *loc. cit.*, pp. 8 f.

<sup>3</sup> Schopenhauer's *Grundlage der Moral*, § 22 (Works, publ. by J. Frauenstädt, IV, pp. 268 ff.).

who once said: "The philosophy of the present is Monism, that is the interpretation of all that happens in the universe", as one unity<sup>1</sup> is right, then this 'philosophy of the present' was already the philosophy of the ancient Indians three thousand years ago.

### THE VEDĀNGAS

In one of the Upaniṣads we are told that there are two kinds of knowledge, a higher and a lower. The higher is that which teaches us to know the imperishable Brahman, but the lower consists of " *R̥gveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Sāmaveda*, *Atharvaveda*, *phonetics*, *ritual*, *grammar*, *etymology*, *metrics* and *astronomy*."<sup>2</sup> This is the oldest enumeration of the so-called *six Vedāṅgas*, i.e. the six 'limbs' or supplementary sciences of the Veda.<sup>3</sup> Originally this meant neither special books nor special schools, but only subjects of instruction, which had to be learned in the Vedic schools themselves, in order to understand the Vedic texts. The beginnings of the Vedāṅgas may therefore already be sought in the Brāhmaṇas and Āraṇyakas, where along with the explanations of the sacrificial ritual we also occasionally find discussions on matters of phonetics, grammar, etymology, metrics and astronomy. In the course of time, however, these subjects were treated more and more systematically, and separate special schools, though still within the Vedic schools, arose for each of the six supplementary sciences of the Veda. These then evolved special school texts, 'manuals', the Sūtras, composed in a peculiar prose style intended for memorisation.

The word *sūtra* originally means 'thread' then a 'short rule', a precept condensed into a few words. As a fabric is made out of several threads (thus the transition of meaning might be explained), so a system of instruction<sup>4</sup> is woven

<sup>1</sup> Supplement to the 'Neue Freie Presse', July 10th, 1904.

<sup>2</sup> *Muṇḍaka-Up.*, I, 1, 5: *ṛgvedo yajurvedaḥ sāmavedo'atharvavedaḥ śikṣā kalpo vyākaraṇam niruktaṃ chando jyotiṣam.*||

<sup>3</sup> Cf. above p. 49, and Ludwig, *Der Rigveda*, III, pp. 74 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the word *tantra* originally signifies 'web', then a system of instruction, a literary work, a book. In Chinese, too, the word *king* means "originally the warp of a texture, then standard, canon, and finally, in a metaphorical sense, any book which is considered as a rule or canon", s. W. Grube, *Geschichte der chinesischen Literatur*, Leipzig, 1902, p. 31.

together out of these short precepts. A larger work consisting of a number of such sūtras strung together is then also called *Sūtra*.<sup>1</sup> These works serve a purely practical purpose. They are to present some science systematically in concise brevity, so that the pupil can easily commit it to memory. There is probably nothing like these sūtras of the Indians in the entire literature of the world. It is the task of the author of such a work to say as much as possible in as few words as possible, even at the expense of clearness and intelligibility. The saying of the grammarian Patañjali has often been quoted that the author of a sūtra rejoices as much over the saving of half a short vowel as over the birth of a son. An idea of the unique sūtra style, the aphoristic prose of these works, can only be given by means of examples. The words in *brackets* in the two following passages in our translation must be supplemented in order to make the sense of the detached words intelligible :

*Apastambīya-Dharmasūtra I, 1, 1, 4-8:*

- Sūtra 4:* (There are) four castes: Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Sūdras.
- Sūtra 5:* Of these the preceding one (is) always better, according to birth (than every succeeding one).
- Sūtra 6:* For (them who are) not Sūdras and have not committed bad actions, (is prescribed:) initiation as a pupil, Veda-study, fire-laying; and (these sacred) acts (are) productive (in this world and the next).
- Sūtra 7* Obedience towards the other castes (is the duty) of the Sūdras.
- Sūtra 8* With each preceding caste which he serves the bliss is greater (i.e., the higher the caste which a Sūdra serves, the greater is the bliss which shall fall to his share in the next world).

*Gobhila-Gṛhyasūtra, I, 5, 1-5; 8-9:*

- Sūtra 1:* Now at the new and full moon (i.e., on the day of the new moon and on the day of the full moon the following ceremonies are to be performed):
- Sūtra 2:* On the day of the full moon (when the moon rises) at (the time of the evening) twilight he shall fast.
- Sūtra 3:* Some (teachers say); on the following (day, i.e., when the moon rises shortly after sunset, he shall fast).

<sup>1</sup> Compare the word *brāhmaṇa*, which originally means 'dictum of a theologian' and is then used collectively for the collections of such dicta, and the word *upaniṣad*, which signifies "first a secret doctrine, then later means a larger work, a collection of secret doctrines". (See above pp. 164 f. and 212 f.).

- Sūtra 4:** Furthermore (he shall fast) on the day on which the moon is not seen, (regarding) this day as the day of the new moon.
- Sūtra 5:** At the end of the half-months one shall fast, at the beginning of the half-months one shall sacrifice (*i.e.*, a day of fasting shall always precede the sacrifices on the day of the new moon or on the day of the full moon).
- Sūtra 8:** But the day on which the moon is not seen, shall be made the day of the new moon (*i.e.*, is to be celebrated as the day of the new moon).
- Sūtra 9:** Even if (the moon) is seen only (a little) once (in the day), (this day can be celebrated as the day of the new moon; for then one says) that (the moon has already) completed her course.

The Sanskrit-text, in the above, contains only the unbracketed words. The pupil memorised only these aphoristic sentences receiving the necessary explanations from the teacher. In later times these explanations by the teachers were also written down, and we have them in the extensive commentaries on all the sūtra-texts, without which the sūtras would mostly be unintelligible to us. This peculiar sūtra-style originated in the prose of the Brāhmaṇas. This prose of the Brāhmaṇas consists almost exclusively of short sentences; indirect speech is entirely absent; the sequence of principal sentences is but rarely interrupted by a relative or conditional clause, and its monotony is only relieved to some extent by participial constructions. Furthermore, in spite of a certain prolixity showing itself especially in awkward repetitions, much that is taken as a matter of course in oral presentation and instruction, remains unsaid, while we have to complete it in our translations.<sup>1</sup> Prose of this nature could easily, by more and more exaggerated simplification, be turned into such lapidary, detached sentences, connected only by the most essential particles, as we find in the sūtras. For the purpose of the greater saving of syllables and still shorter summarising only *one* new element was introduced: the formation of long compound words, with which we meet for the first time in the Sūtras, and which then became particularly characteristic of the classical Sanskrit literature and gained ever greater ascendancy at later periods. The frequent quotations from the Brāhmaṇas in

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 179, Note 1.

the oldest Sūtra-texts, and even when there is no direct quotation, the many Brāhmaṇa-like passages in the midst of the Sūtras make it apparent that the sūtra-style was developed from the prose of the Brāhmaṇas.

### THE LITERATURE OF RITUAL

The oldest Sūtra works are indeed those which even in contents are directly connected with the Brāhmaṇas and Āraṇyakas. The *Aitareya-Āraṇyaka* actually contains passages which are nothing but Sūtras, and which tradition itself ascribes to the composers of Sūtras, Āśvalāyana and Saunaka, and designates as non-revealed.<sup>1</sup> *Sāmaveda* literature, too, comprises a few works erroneously termed 'Brāhmaṇas', which in reality are Sūtras, and on the grounds of their contents must be included in the Vedāṅga literature. Ritual (*Kalpa*), which constitutes the chief contents of the Brāhmaṇas, is then the first Vedāṅga to receive systematic treatment in special manuals, the so-called Kalpasūtras. They arose out of the need for compiling the rules for the sacrificial ritual in a shorter, more manageable and connected form for the practical purposes of the priests. Kalpasūtras dealing with the Śrauta-sacrifices taught in the Brāhmaṇas are called Śrautasūtras, and those dealing with the domestic ceremonies and sacrifices of daily life, the Grhya-rites, are called Grhyasūtras.<sup>2</sup>

The Śrautasūtras thus contain directions for the laying of the three sacred sacrificial fires, for the fire-sacrifice (*Āgnihotra*), the new and full moon sacrifices,<sup>3</sup> the sacrifices of the seasons, the animal sacrifice<sup>4</sup> and especially for the soma-sacrifice with its numerous variations.<sup>5</sup> They are our most important source for

<sup>1</sup> Thus certain sections of the *Sāṅkhāyana-Śrautasūtra* are similar in style and character to the Brāhmaṇas (Weber, *HIL.*, p. 54. Hillebrandt in the preface to his edition of the *Sāṅkhāyana-Śrautasūtra*). In the *Baudhāyana-Kalpasūtra*, too, there are numerous passages which read just like Brāhmaṇas. The Śrautasūtras were not, however, written on the basis of the Brāhmaṇas, but on that of a long oral tradition; s. R. Löbbecke, *Über das Verhältnis der Brāhmaṇas und Śrautasūtren Diss.*, Leipzig, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Max Müller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 314 f., 339.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 48 and 189 f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. A. Hillebrandt, *Das altindische Neu- und Vollmondsopfer*, Jena, 1879.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Julius Schwab, *Das altindische Tieropfer*, Erlangen, 1896.

<sup>6</sup> See above pp. 150 f., and Cf. W. Celand, et V. Henry, *L'Agnistoma, description complète de la forme normale du sacrifice de Soma*, I, Paris, 1906.

the understanding of the Indian sacrifice-cult, and their significance as sources for the history of religion cannot be estimated highly enough.<sup>1</sup>

The contents of the Gṛhyasūtras are still more manifold, and in some respects more interesting. They contain directions for all usages, ceremonies and sacrifices by virtue of which the life of the Indian receives a higher 'sanctity', what the Indians call *saṃskāra*, from the moment when he is conceived in the womb, till the hour of his death and still further through the death-ceremonies and the cult of the soul. We thus find in these works a large number of genuinely popular customs and usages treated in detail, which refer to conception, birth, the mother and the new-born child, the name-giving, the first outing and the first feeding of the child; we find exact directions for the shaving of the boy's head, the introduction of the pupil to the teacher (Upanayana or 'initiation of the pupil'), the mode of life of the Brahmacārin or Veda-student, the relationship between pupil and teacher, and the dismissal of the pupil from the service of the teacher. The customs at wooing, betrothal and marriage are presented in an especially detailed manner. Here in the Gṛhyasūtras, too, the 'five great sacrifices' already mentioned in the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (XI, 5, 6) are minutely described. 'These are indeed great sacrificial feasts', it is said emphatically in the *Brāhmaṇa*, and they are called 'great sacrifices' because their performance is among the most important religious duties of every head of a household, although in reality they consist only of small gifts and a few simple ceremonies. These are the daily sacrifices to the *gods*, *demons* and *fathers*, which need only consist of the pious laying of a log of wood upon the sacred fire of the hearth, a few scraps of food, a libation of water, further, hospitality to a guest (designated as 'sacrifice to man') and fifthly, the daily reading of a section of the Veda, considered as 'sacrifice to the *Brahman* (or the Ṛṣis)'. The simple evening and morning offer-

<sup>1</sup> The entire ritual-literature, besides the chief features of the ritual itself, *Srauta* as well as *Gṛhya* ceremonies, has been treated in detail by A. Hil'ebbrandt in the 'Grundriss', III, 2 (*Rituallitteratur. Vedische Opfer und Zauber*, Strassburg, 1897). The significance of the *Srautasūtras* in the general science of religion was first fully appreciated by H. Hubert and M. Mauss in their *Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice* ('Année Sociologique', Paris, 1897-1898, pp. 29-138).

ings, the new and full moon sacrifices, and the annual festivals connected with sacrifices (from which the Agnihotra, Darśa-pūrṇamāsa and Cāturmāsya sacrifices under the category of the Śrauta-sacrifices may have proceeded) are also presented in the Gr̥hyasūtras. In addition, such customs and ceremonies are described as refer to house-building, cattle-breeding and farming, also those of the magic rites which are to serve for averting diseases and unpropitious omens, as also exorcisms and rites for love magic and such like. Finally, the Gr̥hyasūtras deal also with the funeral customs and the ancestral sacrifice (*Śrāddhas*), which, however, assumed such importance that they were soon treated with their minutest details,<sup>1</sup> in special texts (*Śrāddhakalpas*).

Thus, then, these Gr̥hyasūtras, insignificant though they may be as literary works, afford us a deep insight into the life of the ancient Indians. They are in truth a real treasure for the ethnologist. One need only remember how laboriously the student of classical antiquity has to collect the reports on the daily life of the ancient Greeks and Romans from the most diversified works. Here in India we have the most reliable reports, we may say reports of eye-witnesses, upon the daily life of the ancient Indians, in the form of rules and precepts in these apparently insignificant sūtra-texts. They are, as it were, the 'Folklore Journals' of ancient India. It is true, they describe the life of the ancient Indian father of the family only from the religious side, but as religion permeated the whole existence of the ancient Indians to such an extent that actually nothing could take place without an attendant religious ceremony, they are for the ethnologist most invaluable sources for the popular customs and usages of that ancient period. The numerous parallels in the manners and customs of other Indo-European peoples, which have been discovered long ago, with the usages described in the Gr̥hyasūtras, make these documents all the more important. In particular, the comparison of the Greek, Roman, Teutonic and

<sup>1</sup> In the investigation of funeral customs and ancestor-cult based on Indian ritual literature, W. Caland has rendered signal service by his works: *Über Totenverehrung bei einigen der indogermanischen Völker*, Amsterdam, 1889. *Altindischer Ahnenkult*, Leyden, 1893. *Die altindischen Todten- und Bestattungsgebräuche*, Amsterdam, 1896. Cf. Winternitz, *Notes on Śrāddhas*, WZKM., 4, 1890, pp. 199 ff.



Slavonic marriage customs with the rules contained in the Gr̥hyasūtras, has shown that the relationship of the Indo-European peoples is not limited to language, but that these peoples, related in language, have also preserved common features from prehistoric times in their manners and customs.<sup>1</sup>

No less important is a third class of text-books, directly connected with the Gr̥hyasūtras, and probably originating only as a continuation of them, namely the Dharmasūtras, i.e., text-books which deal with the *Dharma*. *Dharma*, however, signifies 'right, duty, law', as well as 'religion, custom, usage'. Therefore, these works deal with secular as well as religious law, which indeed are inseparable in India. They give rules and regulations for the duties of the castes and the stages of life (*āśramas*). Through these works the Brahmans succeeded in transforming the law of ancient India to their own advantage, and in making their influence felt in all directions. We shall deal with these Dharmasūtras in detail in the section on legal literature. They are mentioned here only because, like the Srauta and Gr̥hyasūtras, they originated in the Vedic schools, and with these form a component part of the Kalpasūtras or text-books of ritual.

Lastly, the Sulvasūtras, which are directly attached to the Srautāsūtras, should be mentioned in connection with these Kalpasūtras. They contain exact rules for the measurement (Sulva means 'measuring-string') and the building of the place of sacrifice and the fire-altars, and as the oldest works on Indian geometry, are of no little importance for the history of science.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. E. Haas and A. Weber, *Die Heiratsgebräuche der alten Inder, nach den Gr̥hyasūtra* (in Vol. 5. of *Indische Studien*); L. v. Schroeder, *Die Hochzeitsgebräuche der Esten und einiger anderer finnisch-ugrischer Völkerschaften in Vergleichung mit denen der indogermanischen Völker*, Berlin, 1888. B. W. Leist, *Altarisches Jus gentium*, Jena, 1889; M. Winternitz, *Das altindische Hochzeitsrituell nach dem Āpastambīya-Gr̥hyasūtra und einigen anderen verwandten Werken. Mit Vergleichung der Hochzeitsgebräuche bei den übrigen indogermanischen Völkern*. ('Denkschriften der kais. Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, phil.—hist. Kl.', Vol. XL. Vienna, 1892); M. Winternitz, *On a Comparative Study of Indo-European Customs, with special reference to the Marriage Customs* ('The International Folk-Lore Congress', 1891, 'Papers and Transactions', London, 1892, pp. 267-91). O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertums-kunde*, Strassburg, 1901, pp. 358 ff. Th. Zacharias *Zum altindischen Hochzeiteritual*, WZKM., Vol. XVII, pp. 135 ff., 211 ff.

The Śrauta and Gr̥hyasūtras are also of great importance for the interpretation of the Vedas. They contain not only the rules for the ritual, but also for the use (*vinīyoga*) of the *Mantras*, i.e., of the prayers and formulas. They are mostly verses or Yajus-formulas, which occur in the Vedic Samhitās; and for their correct explanation their use in the sacrificial rites is by no means insignificant. Often enough, indeed, the mantras have nothing to do with the sacrificial acts for which they are prescribed, and it is extremely interesting, from the point of view of the history of religion, to see how often prayers are used for purposes to which they are not at all suited, and how often they have been entirely misunderstood, wrongly interpreted, or even arbitrarily altered.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes, however, their ceremonial use does give the key to the explanation of a difficult passage in the Veda. As a rule the mantras are enclosed in the sūtras, and are quoted there, now in their entirety, now only with the commencing words of the verses, which are assumed to be familiar.

It is the mantras too, which show most clearly the connexion of the Kalpasūtras with certain Vedic schools. Thus, for instance, the Śrauta and Gr̥hyasūtras of the *Black Yajurveda*, gave the prayers in the form which they assume in the Samhitās of the *Black Yajurveda*; and they give only the first words of the verses or Yajus-formulas, which are taken literally from the Samhitā to which they belong, that is, taking for granted that they are known, while they give other mantras, for instance those out of the *R̥gveda* or *Atharvaveda*, in entirety. There are, moreover, in all the sūtras also a number of mantras which do not occur in the Samhitās. There are two Gr̥hyasūtras in which the mantras are altogether separate from the sūtra-text and are combined in special prayer-books; these are the *Mantrabrāhmaṇa*,<sup>2</sup> which contains the prayers for the *Gobhila-Gr̥hyasūtra*, and the *Mantrapāṭha*,<sup>3</sup> belonging to the *Āpastambīya-Gr̥hyasūtra*.

<sup>1</sup> See Winternitz, *The Mantrapāṭha*, pp. xxix f. and Edwin W. Fay, *The Rig-Veda Mantras in the Gr̥hyasūtras*, Diss. Roanoke, Va. 1899.

<sup>2</sup> Edited, with commentary, by Satyavratā Sāmaśrami in the *Uṣā*, Calcutta, 1890; the first Prapāṭhaka with German translation by Heinrich Stönnner. Halle a. S. 1901 (Diss.); the second Prapāṭhaka, with Sāyana's Comm. and German translation, by Hans Jørgensen, Darmstadt, 1911 (Diss. Kiel).

<sup>3</sup> *The Mantrapāṭha, or The Prayer Book of the Āpastambins*. Edited by M. Winternitz. Oxford ('Anecdota Oxoniensia'), 1897.

Only in the *Black Yajurveda* schools of *Baudhāyana* and of *Āpastamba* do we find *Kalpasūtras* containing all the four kinds of *sūtra*-texts, *Srauta*, *Grhya*, *Dharma* and *Sulvasūtras*; and in these cases it can also be proved that these works are indeed so interconnected that, to a certain extent, they can be regarded as the four volumes of a uniform work. It is possible that *Baudhāyana* and *Āpastamba* were actually the authors of complete *Kalpasūtras* comprising all the four kinds of texts. But even if they were not the actual authors, at all events, the *Srauta*, *Grhya*, *Dharma* and *Sulvasūtras* of the *Baudhāyana* and *Āpastamba* schools are works composed in each case on a uniform plan, of these two schools<sup>1</sup> of the *Yajurveda*.

Closely related to the *sūtras* of the *Āpastamba* school are those of the schools of *Bhāradvāja* and of *Satyāśāḍha Hiranyakeśin*. The *Srautasūtra* of the *Bhāradvājas* is only known in manuscripts, whereas the *Grhyasūtra* has been published.<sup>2</sup> Both the *Srauta* and the *Grhyasūtras*<sup>3</sup> of the *Hiranyakeśins* have been published, whilst the *Hiranyakeśi-Dharmasūtra* scarcely differs from the *Āpastambīya-Dharmasūtra*.

All these *sūtras*, to which we may add those of the hitherto less known schools of the *Vādhūlas*<sup>4</sup> and *Vaikhānasas*,<sup>5</sup> are closely associated with the *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā*. There can

<sup>1</sup> The *Baudhāyana-Srautasūtra* has been edited by W. Caland, *Bibl. Ind.*, 1904-24; the *Baudhāyana-Grhyasūtra* by L. Srinivāsacharya, Mysore, 1904 (*Bibliotheca Sanscrita*, No. 82); selections from the *Grhyasūtra* translated by P. Harting, Amersfoort, 1922; the *Baudhāyana-Sulvasūtra* has been edited and translated by G. Thibaut in the *Pandit*, Vols. IX ff. On the *Baudhāyana-Sūtras* s. Caland, *Das rituelle Sūtra des Baudhāyana*, Leipzig, 1903 (AKM., XII, 1).—The *Āpastambīya-Srautasūtra* has been edited by R. Garbe, *Bibl. Ind.*, 1882-1903, and Books 1-7 translated into German by W. Caland, Göttingen, 1921; the *Āpastambīya-Grhyasūtra* ed. by M. Winternitz, Vienna, 1887, and translated, with the *Āpastamba-Paribhāṣasūtras*, by Oldenberg, SBE., Vol. 30; the *Āpastambīya-Sulvasūtra* ed. and translated into German by Albert Bürk, ZDMG., Vols. 55, 56, 1901-2. Critical and explanatory notes on the *Āpastambīya-Srautasūtra* by Caland, ZDMG., 72, 1918, pp. 27 ff. On the *Srautasūtras* of the *Black-Yajurveda* s. also A. B. Keith, HOS., Vol. 18, pp. xlii ff.

<sup>2</sup> By Henriette J. W. Salomons, Leyden, 1913.

<sup>3</sup> *Hiranyakeśi-Srautasūtra* ed. with Comm. in *AnSS* No. 53; *Hiranyakeśi-Grhyasūtra* ed. by J. Kirste, Vienna, 1889, and translated by Oldenberg in SBE., Vol. 30.

<sup>4</sup> On some fragments of the *Vādhūla-Sūtras*, which are related to those of *Baudhāyana*, s. Caland, *Acta Orientalia* I, pp. 3 ff.; II, pp. 142 ff.

<sup>5</sup> On the *Vaikhānasa-Sūtras* s. Th. Bloch, *Über das Grhya- und Dharmasūtra der Vaikhānasa*, Leipzig, 1896. The *Vaikhānasa-dharmasūtra* has been published by Ganapati Sāstrī in TSS, No. 26, 1913.

be no doubt that Baudhāyana is the earliest of these sūtra-writers,<sup>1</sup> his successors being Bhāradvāja, Āpastamba and Hiranyakeśin in chronological order. The Śrauta, Gṛhya and Sulvasūtras of the Mānava school,<sup>2</sup> and the *Kāthaka-Gṛhyasūtra*,<sup>3</sup> which is related to the Mānava-Gṛhyasūtra, come under the *Maitrayanī-Saṃhitā*.

Whether a Kalpasūtra embracing all four kinds of sūtras has always existed in every other Vedic school, as in the cases of the schools of Baudhāyana and Āpastamba, cannot be determined. Of these schools which do not belong to the *Black Yajurveda* we actually only possess here a Śrautasūtra, and there a Gṛhyasūtra, while the connection of a few Dharmasūtras with schools of the *Rgveda* or of the *White Yajurveda* is but a very loose one. To the *White Yajurveda* belong: a *Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra*,<sup>4</sup> a *Pāraskara-Gṛhyasūtra*<sup>5</sup> and a *Kātyāyana-Sulvasūtra*,<sup>6</sup> to the *Rgveda* an *Aśvalāyana-Śrautasūtra*,<sup>7</sup> and *Aśvalāyana-Gṛhyasūtra*<sup>8</sup> a Śrautasūtra and a Gṛhyasūtra of Sāṅkhāyana;<sup>9</sup> to

<sup>1</sup> This is also confirmed by Baudhāyana's style, which is sometimes intermediate between Brāhmaṇa and Sūtra-style. Baudhāyana is sometimes called a *pravacanākāra*, and it seems that *pravacana* is the term for a literary type which forms a transitory stage between Brāhmaṇas and Sūtras; s. Winternitz, WZKM., 17, 1908, pp. 289 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Mānava-Śrautasūtra*, Books I-V, edited by F. Knauer, St. Petersburg, 1900 ff.; the Cayana of the *Mānava-Śrautasūtra* by J. M. van Gelder, Leyden, 1921 (Diss.); the *Mānava-Gṛhyasūtra* by F. Knauer, St. Petersburg, 1897. The *Mānava-Śrautasūtra* is perhaps the oldest Śrautasūtra. Garbe (*Āpastamba Śrautasūtra* Ed., Vol. III, pp. xxii f.) has shown that it is certainly older than Āpastamba who refers to it. On the *Mānava-Gṛhyasūtra* s. also P. v. Bradke, ZDMG., Vol. 36. The *Vārāhagṛhyasūtra* (ed. by H. Sama Sastry, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, No. 18, Baroda, 1921), belonging to a school of the Maitrayanīya, is a late work.

<sup>3</sup> An edition of the *Kāthaka-Gṛhyasūtra* by W. Caland is announced as being in the press by the D. A. V. College, Lahore.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. by A. Weber, *The White Yajurveda*, Vol. III.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. with a German translation by A. F. Stenzler, *Indische Hausregeln*, AKM., VI, 2 and 4, 1876-78; with Harihare's comm. by Lādhāram Sarman, Bombay, 1890; translated by H. Oldenberg, SBE., Vol. 29.

<sup>6</sup> A Parisiṣṭa to this (*Kātyāyana-Sulbapariṣiṣṭam*) ed. by G. Thibaut in *Pandit*, N.S., Vol. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Edition in *Bibl. Ind.* Cf. Keith, HOS., Vol. 25, pp. 51 ff.; P. Sabbathier, *L'Agnishōma d'après le Śrauta-sūtra d'Āśvalāyana*, JA., 15, 1890, 1 ff., 186 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Ed. with Commentary of Gārgya Nārāyana in *Bibl. Ind.*, 1869; with Commentary of Haradattācārya, by Gaṇapati Śāstri in TSS, No. 78, 1923; with German translation by A. F. Stenzler, *Indische Hausregeln*, AKM., III, 4, 1864 and IV, 1, 1865; translated into English by H. Oldenberg, SBE., Vol. 29.

<sup>9</sup> *Sāṅkhāyana-Śrautasūtra* ed. by A. Hillebrandt in *Bibl. Ind.*, 1868 ff. Cf. Keith, JAS., 1907, pp. 410 ff. and HOS., Vol. 25, pp. 50 f. *Sāṅkhāyana-Gṛhyasūtra*, Sanskrit

the Sāmaveda the closely related Śrautasūtras of Lāṭyāyana<sup>1</sup> and Drāhyāyana,<sup>2</sup> a Śrautasūtra and a Gr̥hyasūtra of the Jaiminiya school,<sup>3</sup> and the Gr̥hyasūtras of Gobhila<sup>4</sup> and Khādīra.<sup>5</sup> *Sāmaveda* literature also includes the Ārṣeyakalpa, also known as the *Maśakakalpasūtra*,<sup>6</sup> which teaches which melodies are to be sung to the various stanzas at the soma festivals. This sūtra is intimately connected with the *Pañcaviṃśa-Brahmaṇa* and is earlier than the *Lāṭyāyana-Śrautasūtra*. Lastly, among *Atharvaveda* literature we have a *Vaitāna-Śrautasūtra*,<sup>7</sup> a work which originated very late, and which was added to the *Atharvaveda* in order to make it of equal value with the remaining three Vedas, and the much older and more important *Kauśikasūtra*.<sup>8</sup> This is only partly a Gr̥hyasūtra, which, like the other Gr̥hyasūtras, treats of domestic ritual; but it is much more extensive and also contains the most minute directions for the performance of those magic rites for which the songs and spells of the *Atharvaveda* were used. This *Kauśikasūtra* is thus a most valuable complement to the *Atharvaveda-Sāṃhita* and an inestimable source for our knowledge

and German by H. Oldenberg, *Ind. Stud.*, Vol. 15; English translation by the same scholar, SBE., Vol. 29. *Sāṃkhyāyanagrihyasaṃgraha* by Pandita Vasudeva, ed. by Homanāthopādhyāya, Nyāyopādhyāya and Kāvyatīrtha, and *Kauśikagrihyasūtras* ed. by Ratna Gopāla Bhatta, BenSS., 1908.

<sup>1</sup> Edition in *Bibl. Ind.* A few chapters translated into German by R. Simon, ZII., Vol. 2, 1923, pp. 1 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. by J. N. Reuter, Part I. London, 1904.

<sup>3</sup> D. Gaastra, *Bijdrage tot de Kennis van het vedische ritueel, Jaiminiya-Śrautasūtra*, Leyden, 1906, being text and translation of the Agniṣṭoma chapter; text of the Śrautakārikā, *ib.* pp. 36-60. The *Jaiminigr̥hyasūtra* ed. and translated by W. Caland, Lahore, 1922 (Punjab Sanskrit Series, No. 2).

<sup>4</sup> Ed. with Comm. by Chandrakanta Tarkalankar, 2nd Ed., in *Bibl. Ind.*, 1906-08. Critically edited, with German translation, by F. Knauer, Dorpat, 1884, 1886. Translated into English by H. Oldenberg, SBE., Vol. 36.

<sup>5</sup> Text and English translation by H. Oldenberg in SBE., Vol. 29.

<sup>6</sup> Ed. by W. Caland, AKM., XII, 3, Leipzig, 1908. Maśaka is the name of the author.

<sup>7</sup> Edited and translated into German by R. Garbe, London and Strassburg, 1878; the translation is superseded by that of W. Caland, Amsterdam (Akad.), 1910. On the position of the *Vaitānasūtra* in the *Atharvaveda* literature s. Caland, WZKM., 18, 1904. 185 ff.; Keith, JRAS., 1910, 984 ff.; Bloomfield, GGA., 1912, No. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Edited by M. Bloomfield, New Haven, 1890. Numerous extracts from this Sūtra have been given by the same scholar in the Notes to his English translation of selected hymns of the *Atharvaveda* (SBE., Vol. 42). The most important sections of the *Kauśikasūtra* referring to magic, have also been translated into German by W. Caland in his work: *Altindisches Zauberritual*, Amsterdam, 1900.

of ancient Indian magic. The *Sāmavidhāna-Brāhmaṇa*, too, attached to the *Sāmaveda* is an interesting book of magic, belonging, in spite of its title, to the *Sūtra* literature.

The *Gr̥hyasūtras* are followed up by the *Śrāddhakalpas* and *Pit̥rmedhasūtras*, which contain rules for the *Śrāddhas* and the ancestral sacrifices. Some of these texts may be classed in the categories of the ritual texts of the Vedic schools after which they are named, whilst others are later productions.<sup>2</sup> The *sūtra*-texts, however, do not exhaust the literature on ritual by any means. Just as the *Upaniṣads* of the *Veda* are followed up by the post-Vedic *Upaniṣad* literature, so the Vedic ritual literature is followed up by literary activity in the realm of ritual, which has continued down to the most recent times. Next after the *Śrauta* and *Gr̥hyasūtras* follow the *Parīṣiṣṭas* or 'addenda', in which certain things are treated in greater detail, which have merely been briefly indicated in the *Sūtras*. The *Parīṣiṣṭas* appended to the *Gobhila-gr̥hyasūtra* are of importance, namely, the *Gr̥hyasaṃgrahaparīṣiṣṭa* of Gobhilaputra,<sup>3</sup> and the *Karma-pradīpa*.<sup>4</sup> The *Parīṣiṣṭa* of the *Atharvaveda*,<sup>5</sup> which throw light more especially on all kinds of magical practices, omens and portents and the like, are of great value from the point of view

<sup>1</sup> Edited by A. C. Burnell, London, 1873. Translated into German by Sten Konow, *Das Sāmavidhānabrāhmaṇa, ein altindisches Handbuch der Zauberei*, Halle a.S., 1898.

<sup>2</sup> *Mānavas̥rāddhakalpa* ed. by W. Caland, *Altindischer Ahnencult*, pp. 228 ff., *Śrāddhakalpa of the Saunakins*, ib., pp. 240 ff., fragments of a *Paippalādas̥rāddhakalpa*, ib., pp. 243 ff., *Kātyāyanaśrāddhakalpa*, ib., pp. 245 ff. On the *Gautamaśrāddhakalpa* s. Caland in *Bijdragen tot de taal, land en volkenkunde van Ned. Indië*, 6e Volg. deel I, 1894. The *Pit̥rmedhasūtras* of Baudhāyana Hiranyakeśin, Gautama ed. W. Caland, AKM., X, 3, 1896; the 2nd and 3rd *Prāśnas* of Baudh.-*Pit̥rmedhasūtra* by C. H. Raabe. *Bijdrage tot de kennis van het hindoesche toodenritueel*, Leyden 1911.

<sup>3</sup> See M. Bloomfield in ZDMG., Vol. 35. Edited by Ch. Tarkalankar, *Bibl. Ind.*, 1910. Other *Gobhilya-Parīṣiṣṭas* (*Sandhyāsūtra*, *Snānasūtra*, *Śrāddhakalpa*, etc.), ed. by the same scholar, *Bibl. Ind.*, 1909.

<sup>4</sup> The first part of the *Karmapradīpa* ed. and translated into German by F. Schrader Halle, a.S. 1889, the second part by A.v. Staël-Holstein, Halle, a.S. 1900 (Diss.). Cf. Hillebrandt, *Rituallitteratur*, pp. 37 f., and Caland, *Altindischer Ahnencult*, pp. 112 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. by G. M. Bolling and J. von Negelein, Leipzig, 1909-10. See also J. v. Negelein, *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, 1908, 447 ff., Winternitz, WZKM., 23, 1909, 401 ff., and Keith, JRAS., 1912, 757 ff. The *Sāntikalpa* of the *Atharvaveda* (ed. by G. M. Bolling, *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 35, 1904, 77 ff.; JAOS., 33, 1913, 265 ff.) treats of rites for driving away the evil consequences of portents. The *Ath.-Parīṣiṣṭas* sometimes give a clue to the explanation of the hymns of the *Atharvaveda* where the *Kausikasūtra* fails; s. F. Edgerton, *Studies in Honor of M. Bloomfield*, p. 118. • •

of the history of religion. One of the most oldest *Parīśiṣṭas* is the *Prāyaścittasūtra*,<sup>1</sup> which has come down as part of the *Vaitānasūtra*, and treats of the expiatory rites. Later ritual works are the *Prayogas*, 'practical handbooks', the *Paddhatis*, 'outlines', and the *Kārikās*, versified presentations of the ritual. All these works deal either with the complete ritual of some Vedic school or, which is more often the case, with some special rites. The special works on marriage customs, burial of the dead and ancestral sacrifices (*Śrāddhas*), are of particular importance, though most of these works are known only through manuscripts and Indian prints.

### THE EXEGETIC VEDAṄGAS

Those *Sūtra*-texts which deal with *Śikṣā* or 'phonetics' are at least as old as the *Kalpasūtras*. While the *Kalpasūtras* are supplementary works to the *Brāhmaṇa* portion of the *Veda*, the *sūtras* of the *Vedāṅga Śikṣā* are very closely related to the *Samhitās* of the *Vedas*.

'*Śikṣā*' actually means 'instruction', then in particular 'instruction in reciting', i.e., in the correct pronunciation, accentuation, etc., of the *Samhitā*-texts. The earliest mention of this *Vedāṅga* is to be found in the *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* (I, 2), where the teaching of the letters, the accents, the quantity (of syllables) the stress, the melody and the combination of words in continuous recitation, are enumerated as the six chapters of the *Śikṣā*. Like the doctrine of the ritual, the *Śikṣā* also arose out of a religious need. For in order to perform a sacrificial act correctly it was not only necessary to know the ritual, but also to be able to pronounce the sacred texts accurately and recite them without errors, just as they were handed down in the *Samhitās*. This presupposes that, at the time when the text-books of the *Śikṣā* originated, the Vedic *Samhitās* were already established as sacred texts, that they had already obtained a definite form by the agency of editors trained in phonetics. It can actually be proved that, for instance, the *Rgveda-Samhitā*

<sup>1</sup> The *Atharvaprāyaścittāni* have been edited by J. v. Negelein. New Haven, 1915 (reprinted from JAOS., 1913-14). See also Caland, WZKM., 28, 1904, 197 f.

does not give the hymns in the form in which they were composed by the ancient singers. Though the editors did not alter the words themselves, yet in the matter of pronunciation, the initial and final sound of the words, the avoidance of the hiatus, and so on, they were led by their phonetic theories into deviating from the original manner of recitation. Thus, for instance, we read in our *Samhitā* *tvam hyagne*, but can prove (on the ground of metre), that the old singers said *tuam hi agne*. The Vedic *Samhitās* themselves are then already the works of phoneticians. But beside the *Samhitā-Pāṭhas*, i.e., the *Samhitā*-texts, as they had to be recited according to the teaching of the *Sikṣā*, there are also the so-called *Pada-Pāṭhas* or 'word-texts', in which the individual words appear separate from the phonetic connection in which they are presented in the *Samhitā*-text. One example will suffice to make the difference between *Samhitā-Pāṭha* and *Pada-Pāṭha* clear. A verse in our *Ṛgveda-Samhitā* runs :

*agnih pū'rv bhir'ṛṣibhirī'dyo nū'tanairutā | sá devā'n éhā vakṣati*

In the *Pada-Pāṭha* this verse runs :

*agnih | pū'rvebhiḥ—ṛṣi-bhiḥ | ī'dyah | nū'tanaiḥ | utā | sá | devā'n  
ā' | ihā | vakṣati. ||*

These *Pada-Pāṭhas* are, of course, the work of theologians trained in phonetics, in fact of grammarians, for they present the text of the verses in a complete grammatical analysis. Yet they must be fairly old. The *Pada-Pāṭha* of the *Ṛgveda* is ascribed to *Sākalya*, a teacher who is already mentioned in the *Aitareya-Āraṇyaka*.<sup>1</sup>

*Samhitā-Pāṭhas* and *Pada-Pāṭhas*, then, are the oldest productions of the *Sikṣā* schools. The oldest text-books of this *Vedāṅga* which have come down to us are, however, the *Prātiśākhya*s, which contain the rules by the aid of which one can form the *Samhitā-Pāṭha* from the *Pada-Pāṭha*. Hence they contain instruction upon the pronunciation, the accentuation, the euphonic alterations of the sounds in the composition of words and in the initial and final sound of words in the sentence,

<sup>1</sup> On the *Pada-Pāṭha* of *Sākalya* s. B. Liebig, *Zur Einführung in die indische einheimische Sprachwissenschaft*, II, Heidelberg, 1919, pp. 20 ff. On the *Pada-Pāṭha* of the *Taittirīya-Samhitā* s. A. Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, 13, 1-128, and A. B. Keith, *HOS.*, Vol. 13, pp. xxx ff.



upon the lengthening of vowels, in short, upon the whole manner of the recitation of the *Samhitā*. Every *Sākhā* or recension of a *Samhitā* had a text-book of this nature, hence the name *Prātisākhyas*, i.e., 'text-books, each intended for a *Sākhā*'. First of all we have a *Rgveda-Prātisākhya*,<sup>1</sup> which is ascribed to *Saunaka*, who is supposed to have been a teacher of *Aśvalāyana*. This work is in verse, and is probably a later revision of an earlier *Sūtra*-text: it is even called 'Sūtra' in manuscripts and quotations. The *Taittirīya-Prātisākhya-sūtra*,<sup>2</sup> belongs to the *Taittirīya-Samhitā*; a *Vājasaneyi-Prātisākhya-sūtra*,<sup>3</sup> ascribed to *Kātyāyana*, belongs to the *Vājasaneyi-Samhitā*, and the *Atharvaveda-Samhitā* has an *Atharvaveda-Prātisākhya-sūtra*,<sup>4</sup> which is supposed to be of the school of the *Saunakas*. There is also a *Sāmaprātisākhya*,<sup>5</sup> and the *Puṣpasūtra*<sup>6</sup> is a kind of *Prātisākhya* to the *Uttaragāna* of the *Sāmaveda*. A further work dealing with the manner of singing the *Sāmans* at the sacrifice, is the *Pañcavidha-sūtra*.<sup>7</sup>

These works are of twofold importance: firstly, for the history of grammatical study in India, which, as far as we know, commences with these *Prātisākhyas*. Though they are not actually grammatical works themselves, they treat of subjects pertaining to grammar, and the quotations from so many grammarians prove that the study of grammar was already flourishing at their time. Secondly, they are still

<sup>1</sup> Edited, with a translation into German, by Max Müller, Leipzig, 1856-69. On the metrics of the *Rgveda-Prātisākhya*, s. H. Oldenberg, NGGW., 1919, pp. 170 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Text, Translation and Notes by W. D. Whitney, New Haven, 1871 (JAOS., Vol. 9). On the relation of the *Taittirīya-Prātisākhya* to the *Taittirīya-Samhitā*, s. Keith, HOS., Vol. 18, pp. xxxi ff. It is certainly older than Pāṇini.

<sup>3</sup> Edited by P. Y. Pathak, Benares, 1883-88; text with German translation by A. Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, 4, 65-160, 177-331. The *Pratijñāsūtra* (edited and explained by Weber in ABA., 1871, pp. 69 ff.) is an appendix to this *Prātisākhya*.

<sup>4</sup> Critically edited by Vishva Bandhu Vidyārthi Śāstri, Part I, Punjab University, 1923. This is different from the *Saunakiyā Caturādhyāyikā*, which has been edited and translated as an *Atharvaveda-Prātisākhya* by W. D. Whitney, New Haven, 1862 (JAOS., Vol. 7).

<sup>5</sup> Ed. by Satyavrata Sāmaśrami in *Uṣā*, Calcutta, 1890.

<sup>6</sup> Ed. and translated into German by R. Simon, ABayA., 1909, pp. 481-780. On the mutual relation between *Puṣpasūtra*, *Arṣeyakalpa* and *Uttaragāna*, s. Simon, *loc. cit.*, 499 ff.; ZDMG., 63, 1909, 730 ff. and Celand, ZDMG., 64, 1910, 347 f.

<sup>7</sup> Ed. and translated into German by R. Simon, Breslau, 1916, ('Indische Forschungen', Nr. 5).

more important because they are pledges of the fact that the texts of the Saṃhitās as we have them to-day, have remained unaltered through all the centuries since the time of the Prātiśākhya. Thus the rules of the Ṛgveda-Prātiśākhya take for granted that, at the period of the latter, the *Ṛgveda-Saṃhitā* was not only firmly established in its division into ten Maṇḍalas, but that even the order of the hymns in each Maṇḍala was the same as it is now. Indeed, the minute rules of Saunaka leave no doubt that, at the period of the latter, the text of the *Ṛgveda-Saṃhitā* read, word for word and syllable for syllable, almost exactly as we find it at the present day in our printed editions.

These Prātiśākhyas are the earliest representatives of the Vedāṅga Śikṣā. Beside them we find more modern works, short treatises on phonetics, which claim the title of Śikṣās and give famous names, such as Bhāradvāja, Vyāsa, Vāsiṣṭha, Yājñavalkya and so on, as their authors. They follow the Prātiśākhyas in much the same way as, at later periods, versified law-books followed up the ancient Vedic Dharmasūtras, also mentioning as their authors names famous in antiquity. Some of these Śikṣās are comparatively old and are more directly associated with some Prātiśākhya or other, *e.g.*, the Vyāsa-Śikṣā<sup>1</sup> with the Taittirīya-Prātiśākhya, while others are of much later origin and of no importance either for grammar or for the history of the Vedic texts.<sup>2</sup>

*Saunaka* and *Kātyāyana*, who are mentioned as authors of Prātiśākhyas, are also considered to be the authors of works very closely connected with the Vedāṅga literature because they deal also with the texts of the Vedic Saṃhitās, though they are not called Vedāṅgas. These works are the Anukramaṇīs, *i.e.*,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. Lüders, *Die Vyāsa-Śikṣā besonders in ihrem Verhältnis zum Taittirīya-Prātiśākhya*, Kiel, 1895.

<sup>2</sup> On the Śikṣās s. F. Kielhorn, *Ind. Ant.*, 5, 1876, 141 ff., 198 ff. On the *Pāṇiniya-Śikṣā* s. A. Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, 4, 435 ff. and E. Liebhich, *Zur Einführung in die indische einheimische Sprachwissenschaft*, II, p. 20, who says that though late in form, it is old in contents. The *Nāradya-Śikṣā* is edited in Satyavrata Śāmaśrami's *Uṣā*, I, 4, Calcutta, 1890; the 'Bhāradvāja-Śikṣā' (*cum versione latina, excerptis ex commentario, etc.*) by E. Sieg, Berlin, 1892. A collection of 'Śikṣās' (*Śikṣāsamgraha*) has been published in BenSS., 1898. •

' catalogues ', ' lists ', ' indexes ' which give the contents of the Vedic Saṃhitās with regard to different items.' Thus Saunaka composed an Anukramaṇī or a catalogue of the Ṛṣis of the *Rgveda* hymns, also a catalogue of the metres, one of the deities and a further one of the hymns. Kātyāyana is the author of a Sarvānukramaṇī,<sup>2</sup> i.e., a 'catalogue of all things' for the *Rgveda*. This work gives, in the form of sūtras, the first words of every hymn, then the number of verses, the name and family of the ṛṣi to whom the hymn is ascribed, of the deities to whom the single verses are addressed, and the metre or metres in which the hymn is composed. The two metrical works *Bṛhaddevatā* and *Rgvidhāna* are again ascribed to Saunaka. They are not, however, the work of Saunaka himself, but that of his school. The *Bṛhaddevatā*<sup>3</sup> is an enlarged catalogue of the gods worshipped in the separate hymns of the *Rgveda*; for it contains also myths and legends referring to these deities, and is therefore at the same time an important work from the point of view of Indian narrative literature. The *Bṛhaddevatā* is obviously one of the earliest Indian narrative works, for its metres, the triṣṭubh as well as the śloka, occupy a middle position in point of time between Vedic and epic metre; and furthermore, those legends which are common to the *Bṛhaddevatā* and the *Mahābhārata*, appear in a later form in the epic.<sup>4</sup> The *Rgvidhāna* <sup>5</sup> also in the form of a catalogue following the division of our *Rgveda-Saṃhitā*, states the magic power which can be obtained by the recitation of each hymn or even of single verses. It is somewhat similar to the above-mentioned Sāma-vidhāna-Brāhmaṇa.

Of importance are the Anukramaṇīs and the works related to them, on account of their affording additional proof that even

<sup>1</sup> The *Atharvavedīyapañcapāṭalikā* (ed. by Bhagwaddatta, Lahore, 1920) is an Anukramaṇī of the *Atharvaveda-saṃhitā*. The so-called *Ārṣeya-brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāmaveda* (ed. by A. C. Burnell, Mangalore, 1876, and with commentary by Satyavrata Sāmaśrami in *Uṣṭ*, II, 1, Calcutta, 1892) is also an Anukramaṇī.

<sup>2</sup> Edited by A. A. Macdonell, Oxford ('Anecdota Oxoniensia'), 1886. On a Kashmirian recension of the Sarvānukramaṇī s. Scheftelowitz, *ZII.*, 1, 1922, 89 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. by Rajendralala Mitra in *Bibl. Ind.*, 1892; critically edited and translated into English by A. A. Macdonell, *HOS.*, Vols. 5 and 6, 1904.

<sup>4</sup> See A. Kuhn, *Ind. Stud.*, I, 101 ff.; Keith, *JRAS.*, 1906, pp. 1 ff.; 1912, pp. 769 ff. Winternitz, *WZKM.*, 20, 1906, pp. 1 ff.; Liebich, *Zur Einführung in die ind. einh. Sprachwiss.*, II, 30 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Rgvidhānam* edidit cum praefatione Rudolf Meyér, Berolini, 1878.

in very early times the texts of the Vedic Saṃhitās were in almost exactly the same form, with the same divisions, the same number of verses, and so on, as we have them at present.

The same is true also of the 'Nirukta' of Yāska,<sup>1</sup> which has already been mentioned on another occasion. This work, too, the only one of the Vedāṅga Nirukta which we possess, presupposes the *Ṛgveda-Saṃhitā* in essentially the same condition in which we know it to-day. Tradition erroneously ascribes also the Nighaṇṭus or 'lists of words' to Yāska. In reality, however, the work of Yāska is only a commentary to these lists of words, of which Yāska himself says, that they were composed by the descendants of the ancient sages, for the easier understanding of the transmitted texts. The Nighaṇṭus are five lists of words, which are divided into three sections. The first section (Naighaṇṭukakāṇḍa) consists of three lists, in which Vedic words are collected under certain main ideas. For instance, there are quoted 21 names for 'earth', 15 for 'gold', 16 for 'air', 101 for 'water', 122 verbs for 'to go', 26 adjectives and adverbs for 'quick', 12 for 'much', and so on. The second section (Naigamakāṇḍa or Aikapadika) contains a list of ambiguous and particularly difficult words of the Veda, while the third section (Daivatakāṇḍa) gives a classification of the deities according to the three regions, earth, sky, and heaven.<sup>2</sup> Veda-exegesis probably began with the compilation of such glossaries; the composition of commentaries to these glossaries after the style of our Nirukta, with explanations of difficult Veda verses interwoven, was a further step in the development, and, at a still later period, detailed and continuous commentaries to the Vedic texts were written. Certain it is that Yāska had many predecessors, and

<sup>1</sup> See above p. 60. The *Nirukta* was first edited by R. Roth, Göttingen, 1852; with commentaries and useful indexes by Satyavrata Sāmaśrami in *Bibl. Ind.*, 1882 91; with commentary of Durgācārya, Vol. 1, Adhya. 1-6, edited by V. K. Rajavade, AnSS., No. 88, 1921. On L. Sarup's edition s. above.

<sup>2</sup> On these Nighaṇṭus as the beginnings of Indian lexicography s. Th. Zachariae, *Die indischen Wörterbücher* ('Grundriss', I, 3 B), Strassburg, 1897, pp. 2 f. S. K. Belvalkar (Proc. II OC., pp. 11ff.) has shown that it is possible, with the help of the Nighaṇṭus, esp. the Aikapadika list, to distinguish literary strata in the *Ṛgveda*. Belvalkar dates Yāska's *Nirukta* from the 7th century B.C. This is likely enough, though not certain. But we have no idea how much earlier the Nighaṇṭus may be.

that his work, though certainly very old and the oldest existing Veda-exegetic work, can nevertheless only be regarded as the last, perhaps also the most perfect, production of the literature of the Vedāṅga Nirukta.

Of the Vedāṅgas of metrics and astronomy, too, it is only the latest offshoots of an earlier scientific literature that remain. For the *Sāmaveda* there is the Nidānasūtra, containing not only metrical but other investigations into the various component parts of the *Sāmaveda* (Uktha, Stoma, Gāna). It is also important from the grammatical point of view, and some of the ancient teachers ascribe it to Patañjali.<sup>1</sup> The text-book of *Piṅgala* on metrics, though regarded by the Indians as a Vedāṅga of the *Rgveda* and *Yajurveda*, there being two recensions of it, is nevertheless the work of a later period; for it deals also with metres which only belong to later Sanskrit poetry.<sup>2</sup> The Jyotiṣa-Vedāṅga is a small text-book of astronomy in verse; in the *Yajurveda* recension it contains 43 verses, in that of the *Rgveda* 36. Its main contents are the positions of the moon and the sun at the solstices, as well as the new and full moon in the circle of the 27 Nakṣatras or stars of the zodiac, or rules are drawn up for their calculation.<sup>3</sup> The very circumstance that it is not written in verse, refers this little work which, moreover, has not yet been sufficiently explained, to a later period.

The old Vedāṅga texts on grammar are entirely lost. This science, too, certainly originated in connection with the Veda-exegesis, and proceeded from the Veda schools. For already in the *Āraṇyakas* we find isolated grammatical technical terms. But the oldest and most important text-book of grammar that has come down to us, that of *Pāṇini*, metes out to the Vedic language only casual treatment; it no longer stands in close relation to any

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Weber, HIL., pp. 81f., E. Sieg, *Die Sagenstoffe des Rgveda*, Stuttgart, 1902, pp. 29, 35, 65; and Caland, *Arṣeyakalpa*, pp. xvii ff. A Nidāna of the *Sāmaveda* is quoted in the *Bṛhaddevatā*, V. 23. But the quotation is not found in the Nidānasūtra, printed in the 'Uṣā', Calcutta, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> The *Sūtra* of *Piṅgala* was edited and explained by A. Weber in Vol. 8 of *Ind. Stud.* Cf. also A. Weber, HIL., p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. Weber, *Über den Vedakalender namens Jyotiṣham* (ABA., 1862) and G. Thibaut, *Astronomie* (in the 'Grundriss', III, 9), pp. 17, 20 and 28. *Ātharvaṇa Jyotiṣam* edited by Bhagavad Datta, Lahore, 1924 (Punjab Sanskrit Series, No. 6).

Veda school, and altogether belongs to a period at which the science of grammar was already pursued in special schools, independent of theology. For in India also, as we shall see in the section on scientific literature, science has detached itself more and more from theology, within which it was originally included almost completely.

#### THE AGE OF THE VEDA

We have traced the whole of Vedic literature to its latest offshoots and stragglers, and can now no longer evade the question of the age of the whole of this great literature. If it were possible to determine, even within a few centuries, the period into which the oldest hymns of the *Rgveda* and of the *Atharvaveda* reach back, then it were unnecessary to devote a special chapter to this question. It would suffice to give, in a few words, the approximate age of the Veda. Unfortunately, however, it is a fact, and a fact which it is truly painful to have to admit, that the opinions of the best scholars differ, not to the extent of centuries, but to the extent of thousands of years, with regard to the age of the *Rgveda*. Some lay down the year 1000 B.C. as the earliest limit for the *Rgvedic hymns*, while others consider them to have originated between 3000 and 2500 B.C. In view of the *very great* divergence in the opinions of the specialists, it is not enough, even in a book intended for the general reader, merely to give some approximate date, for even the general reader must have an idea of the circumstances supporting the various opinions on the greater or lesser antiquity of the Veda. This is the more necessary, as the question of the period of the oldest Indian literature coincides with the question of the beginning of the Indo-Aryan civilization, a question which is of the utmost importance to every historian, archæologist and philologist. If, indeed, it is at all possible to determine the periods of the development of Indo-Aryan culture, and, going still further back, those of Indo-European culture, it can only be done hand in hand with investigation as to the period of the earliest monuments of Aryan culture in India.

Under these circumstances, then, it seems to me absolutely necessary to render account of the whole question to the non-specialist also, and, as far as possible, to state the limits and the reasons both of our ignorance and of our knowledge.

On first becoming acquainted with Indian literature, people were inclined to ascribe tremendous antiquity to all Indian literary works. Did not Friedrich Schlegel expect from India nothing less than 'enlightenment upon the history of the primitive world, so dark until now'?<sup>1</sup> As late as in 1852 A. Weber wrote in his *History of Indian Literature*: "The literature of India passes generally for the most ancient literature of which we possess written records, and justly so", and it was only in 1876 in his second edition that he added: "In so far as this claim may not now be disputed by the Egyptian monumental records and papyrus rolls, or even by the Assyrian literature which has but recently been brought to light." The reasons for which, according to Weber, "we are fully justified in regarding the literature of India as the most ancient literature of which written records on an extensive scale have been handed down to us," are in part geographical, in part pertain to the history of religion. In the older parts of the *Rgveda* the Indian nation appears to us to be settled in the Punjab. The gradual spread eastwards across Hindustan towards the Ganges can be traced in the later portions of Vedic literature. The Great Epics then further show us the spread of Brahmanism towards the south. Centuries must have elapsed before such an enormous stretch of land, 'inhabited by wild and vigorous tribes' could become brahmanized. Many centuries, too, must have been required for the religious development from the simple nature worship of the *Rgvedic* hymns up to the theosophical-philosophical speculations of the Upaniṣads, and again to such phases of mythology and cult as Megasthenes, about 300 B.C., found prevalent in India. Weber did not attempt a more exact determination of the Vedic period; in fact, he expressly declares any such attempt to be entirely futile.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Weber, *HIL.*, pp. 2 ff., 6 f.

The first, however, to make this attempt and to endeavour to construct a kind of chronology of the oldest Indian literature, was Max Müller in his *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* which appeared in 1859. Starting from the few definite clues to Indian chronology which we possess, the invasion of Alexander and the appearance of Buddhism,<sup>1</sup> he argued further as follows. Buddhism is nothing but a reaction against Brahmanism, and it presupposes the existence of the whole Veda, *i.e.*, the literature consisting of the hymns, the Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads. The whole of this literature must therefore be *pre-Buddhist*, *i.e.*, it must have originated before 500 B.C. The Vedāṅga or Sūtra literature might be approximately synchronous with the origin and the first spread of Buddhism. Now the origin of these Sūtra works, whose character is such that they necessarily pre-suppose the Brāhmaṇa literature, falls approximately into the period from 600 to 200 B.C. (It is at the fixing on these purely arbitrary dates that the untenable part of Max Müller's calculations begins.) The Brāhmaṇas, however, of which there are earlier and later ones, and which contain long lists of teachers, handed down by earlier Brāhmaṇas, cannot possibly be accommodated in less than 200 years. Therefore, argues Max Müller, we shall have to accept the period from 800 to 600 B.C. as the period of the origin of these prose works. The Brāhmaṇas, however, for their part, again pre-suppose the Vedic Saṃhitās. But the composition of all these collections of songs and prayers would take at least 200 years; hence the interval from roughly 1000 to 800 B.C. might be regarded as the period in which these collections were arranged. However, before the compilation of these collections, which were already regarded as sacred sacrificial poetry and authorised prayer-books, there must have been a period at which the songs and chants contained in them arose as popular or religious poems. This period, Max Müller concluded, must have been before 1000 B.C. And as he had already assumed 200 years for the 'Brāhmaṇa period' and 200 years for the period he called the 'Mantra period', he now also assumed 200 years for the *arising* of this poetry (though without laying much stress

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, opp. 23 f.



on this figure), and thus arrived at 1200 to 1000 B.C. as the period of the beginning of Vedic poetry.

Now it is clear that the supposition of 200 years for each of the different literary epochs in the origin of the Veda is purely arbitrary. Even Max Müller himself did not really wish to say more than that such an interval *at least* must be assumed, and that in 1000 B.C. *at the latest*, our *R̥gveda-Samhitā* must already have been completed. He always considered his date of 1200-1000 B.C. only as a *terminus ad quem*, and in his Gifford Lectures on 'Physical Religion' in 1889,<sup>1</sup> he expressly states "that we cannot hope to fix a *terminus a quo*. Whether the Vedic hymns were composed 1000, or 1500, or 2000, or 3000 years B.C., no power on earth will ever determine." It is remarkable, however, how strong the power of suggestion is even in science. Max Müller's hypothetical and really purely arbitrary determination of the Vedic epochs in the course of years, received more and more the dignity and the character of a scientifically proved fact, without any new arguments or actual proofs having been added. It became a habit, a habit already censured by W. D. Whitney,<sup>2</sup> to say that Max Müller had proved 1200-1000 B.C. as the date of the *R̥gveda*. It was only timidly that a few scholars like L. von Schroeder<sup>3</sup> ventured to go as far back as 1500 or even 2000 B.C. And when, all at once, H. Jacobi attempted to date Vedic literature back to the third millenary B.C. on the grounds of astronomical calculations, scholars raised a great outcry at such heretical procedure, and even to-day most of the Western scholars shake their heads wondering how Jacobi could venture to assert so exaggerated an opinion on the age of the Veda. Strange to say, it has been quite forgotten on what a precarious footing stood the 'opinion prevailing hitherto', which was so zealously defended.

The idea of drawing conclusions on the chronology of the earliest Indian literature with the assistance of *astronomical* data, is no new one. A. Ludwig already undertook an attempt of this

<sup>1</sup> Published, London, 1901, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, First Series, New York, 1872, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> *Indische Literatur und Kultur*, pp. 291 f.

nature on the basis of the eclipses of the sun.<sup>1</sup> The priests of ancient India, who had to determine the times of sacrifice, were, like the pontifices in ancient Rome, at the same time almanac-makers. They had to observe the firmament, in order to regulate and predetermine the times of sacrifice. Hence we find numerous astronomical and calendar data in the Brāhmaṇas and Sūtras. In these, the so-called Nakṣatras or 'lunar mansions' play a particularly prominent part. The ancient Indians had observed that the moon requires about 27 days and nights for its sidereal orbit and stays in a different constellation every night of the sidereal month. These stars or constellations, which all lie not far distant from the ecliptic, were combined into a kind of zodiac, a succession of 27 Nakṣatras embracing the spheres, and this lunar zodiac was employed for the purpose of estimating the position of the moon at a particular time.<sup>2</sup> Thus there are many passages in Vedic literature in which it is said that a sacrificial act is to take place 'under such and such a Nakṣatra', i.e., 'when the moon stands in conjunction with this Nakṣatra'. There are still more numerous passages in which the Nakṣatras are brought into definite relationship with the full moon and new moon. And already in the earlier literature there often appear only twelve of the 27 Nakṣatras connected with the full moon, from which may be traced the names of the months derived from the twelve Nakṣatras. These month-names were originally used only for lunar months, but were later extended also to the twelve divisions of the solar year. But as already in Vedic times attempts had been made to bring the solar and lunar year into accord by some

<sup>1</sup> *Über die Erwähnung von Sonnenfinsternissen im Rigveda.* (Sitzungsberichte der Königl. böhmischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften', Prag, 1885.)

<sup>2</sup> The lunar zodiac has been preserved in India down to the present day, side by side with the solar zodiac, which was probably not introduced into India until the first century A.D. with the doctrines of the Greek astronomers. The problem of the origin of this lunar zodiac, and of the relationship between the Indian Nakṣatras and the Menāzil of the Arabs and the Sieou of the Chinese has not been solved even now. See especially A. Weber, *Die vedischen Nachrichten von den Nakṣatra*, 1, 2, ABA., 1860, 1862; G. Thibaut, *Astronomie* ('Grundriss', III, 9), pp. 12 ff.; H. Oldenberg, *Nakṣatra und sieou*, NGGW., 1909, 544 ff. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, I, 427 ff., plead for Babylonian origin, which F. Hommel (ZDMG., 45, 1891, 592 ff.) has tried to prove; but see B. V. Kāmāvara-Aiyar, *Ind. Ant.*, 48, 1919, 95 ff.

means or another, the question arises whether, out of the combination of certain full-moon Nakṣatras with the seasons of the year and the commencement of the year, conclusions may not be drawn as to the period in which the respective calendar data originate. Such conclusions, which led to surprising results, were attempted in the year 1893, simultaneously and independently of each other, by H. Jacobi in Bonn and the Indian scholar Bāl Gangādhār Tilak in Bombay.<sup>1</sup> Both scholars by different ways arrived at the opinion that at the period of the Brāhmaṇas the Pleiades (*Kṛttikās*), which at that time formed the starting-point of the Nakṣatra series, coincided with the vernal equinox, but that in the Vedic texts there are also to be found traces of an older calendar, in which the vernal equinox fell in Orion (*Mṛgaśīras*). From the calculation of the value of the precession, however, it appears that about 2500 B.C. the vernal equinox lay in the Pleiades and about 4500 in Orion. But while Tilak goes so far as to date some Vedic texts back to the year 6000 B.C., Jacobi contents himself with placing "the beginnings of the period of civilization, as the mature, perhaps even late production of which the songs of the *R̥gveda* have come down to us", at about 4500 B.C. This period of civilization stretches, according to him, roughly from 4500-2500 B.C., and he is inclined to ascribe "the collection of hymns which has come down to us, to the second half of this period".<sup>2</sup> Jacobi was confirmed in this opinion by a second astronomical observation. The Gr̥hyasūtras tell us of a marriage-custom in

<sup>1</sup> A. Ludwig, *Der R̥gveda*, III, Prag, 1878, pp. 183 ff. and R. G. Bhandarkar, *Report*, 1883-84, p. 39, have already pointed out the chronological significance of the Kṛttikās heading the list of the Nakṣatras in the Brāhmaṇas. But Bhandarkar places the Brāhmaṇas between 1200 and 900 B.C. Violent discussions were aroused by H. Jacobi's papers in *Festgruss an Rudolf von Roth*, Stuttgart, 1893, pp. 68-73, in NGGW., 1894, pp. 105-16, and in OC., X, Geneva, 1894, I, pp. 103-08, and the book of B. G. Tilak. *The Orion or Researches into the Antiquity of the Vedas*, Bombay 1893. Cf. G. Bühler, *Ind. Ant.*, 23, 1894, pp. 238 ff.; W. D. Whitney in JAOS. Proceedings, March, 1894 reprinted *Ind. Ant.*, 21, 1895, pp. 361 ff.; G. Thibaut, *Ind. Ant.*, 24, pp. 85 ff.; and *Astronomie* ('Grundriss', IIT, 9) pp. 18 f.; A. Barth, JA., 1894, pp. 156 ff.; 'Oeuvres' II, 248 ff.; A. Weber, SDA., 1894, pp. 775 ff.; H. Oldenberg in ZDMG., 48, 1894, pp. 629 ff.; 49, pp. 470 ff.; 50, pp. 450 ff.; Jacobi in ZDMG., 49, pp. 218 ff.; 50, pp. 69 ff.; F. W. Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, Boston, 1895, pp. 4 ff.; A. A. Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, London, 1900, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Festgruss an Roth*, pp. 71 f.

ancient India, according to which the bride and bridegroom, after they had arrived at their new home, had to sit silently on the hide of a bull, till the stars became visible, whereupon the bridegroom showed his bride the *Pole Star*, called *dhruva*, 'the constant one', and at the same time uttered a prayer, as for example, 'Be constant, prospering in my house', whereto she replied: 'Constant art thou, may I be constant in the house of my husband.' This marriage-custom, in which a 'constant' star figures as the symbol of unchangeable constancy, must have originated at a time in which a brighter star stood so near the celestial pole that it seemed, to the observers of that time, to be standing still. Now it is again a result of the precession that, with the gradual alteration of the celestial equator, its North Pole also moves away, describing in about 26,000 years a circle of  $23\frac{1}{2}$  degrees radius around the constant pole of the ecliptic. By this means, one star after another slowly moves towards the North Pole and becomes North Star or Pole Star; but only from time to time does a *brighter* star approach the Pole so closely that it can, for all practical purposes, be regarded as 'a constant one' (*dhruva*). At present Alpha, a star of the second magnitude, in the Little Bear, is the Pole Star of the Northern hemisphere. This star, of course, cannot be meant when the Pole Star is spoken of in Vedic times, because only 2000 years ago this star was still so far removed from the pole that it could not possibly have been designated as the 'constant one'. Not until 2780 B.C. do we meet with another Pole Star which merited this name. At that time Alpha Draconis stood so near to the Pole for over 500 years that it must have appeared immovable to those who observed with the naked eye. We must, then, place the origin of the name of *Dhruva*, as well as the custom of showing the 'constant' star to the bride on her marriage evening as the symbol of constancy, into a period in which Alpha Draconis was Pole Star, that is, in the first half of the third millenary B.C. In the marriage verses of the *R̥gveda*, however, this custom is not yet thought of, wherefore Jacobi considers it probable "that the use of *Dhruva* in the marriage ceremony does not belong to the time of the *R̥gveda*, but to

the following period, and that, therefore, the *Rgvedic* period of civilization lies before the third millenary B.C.'"<sup>1</sup>

As has been said, the assertion of Jacobi and Tilak met with violent opposition. The most serious objection to the argument about the *Pleiades* was that the Indians of the most ancient times were concerned only with the position of the Nakṣatras in relation to the moon and not to the sun, and that there is not a single trace of any observation of the equinoxes to be found in the most ancient times. The passage<sup>2</sup> in which we read that the Pleiades 'do not swerve from the East' should probably not be interpreted as meaning that they rose 'due east' (which would have been the case in the third millenary B.C., and would point to a knowledge of the vernal equinox): the correct interpretation is more likely that they remain visible in the eastern region for a considerable time—during several hours—every night, which was the case about 1100 B.C.<sup>3</sup> Coming to the argument of the *New Year* in various millenaries, it is most difficult to decide these questions, primarily because in our texts the year sometimes begins with spring, sometimes with winter, and sometimes with the rainy season, and moreover the number of seasons

<sup>1</sup> ZDMG., Vol. 50, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, II, 1, 2, 3. See Oldenberg and Jacobi, ZDMG., 48, p. 631 note; 50, pp. 72 and 452. Sankar B. Dikshi (*Ind. Ant.*, 24, 1895, pp. 245 f.), B. V. Kameśvara Aiyar (*The Age of the Brāhmaṇas*, in the 'Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society', 1922, and previously in Proc. IOC. I. pp. 1 ff. and Dhirendranath Mukhopadhyay, *The Hindu Nakshatras*, pp. 41 f. (Reprint from Vol. VI of the *Journal of the Department of Science*, Calcutta University, 1923), have concluded from this passage, that the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa* was written about 3000 B.C.

<sup>3</sup> I am indebted for this explanation to Professor A. Prey, the astronomer of our University, who informs me that, in about 1100 B.C. the *Pleiades* rose approximately 13° to the north of the east point, approaching nearer and nearer the east line, and crossing it as late as 2<sup>h</sup> 11<sup>m</sup> after their rise, at a height of 29°, when seen from a place situated at 25° North latitude. They thus remain almost due east long enough to serve as a convenient basis for orientation. This interpretation of the passage is proved to be the correct one, by *Baudhāyana-Śrautasūtra* 27, 5 (Cf. v. Caland, *Über das rituelle Sūtra des Baudhāyana*, Leipzig, 1903, pp. 37 ff.), where it is prescribed that the supporting beams of a hut on the place of sacrifice shall face the east, and that this direction shall be fixed after the Pleiades appear, as the latter 'do not depart from the eastern region'. It is true that, about 2100 B.C. or about 3100 B.C., the Pleiades touched the east line earlier, but they proceeded southwards so rapidly that they were not suitable for orientation.

varies between three, five and six.<sup>1</sup> The argument of the *Pole Star*, too, provoked serious objections. We cannot deny the possibility of one of the lesser stars in the Little Bear having been visible (about 1250 B.C. and even later still) as the Pole Star in the clear Indian firmament.<sup>2</sup> At any rate it is not permissible to draw any conclusion from the non-mention of this custom in the *Rgveda*: for by no means all of the marriage-customs are mentioned in the marriage hymn in the *Rgveda* and there is no reason why this particular custom should have been singled out for mention in preference to another.

Though the astronomical arguments of Tilak and Jacobi did not succeed in proving what was to be proved, they have stimulated the enquiry whether there are no other grounds for assuming a greater antiquity of Vedic culture. And indeed, from the point of view of Indian history, *nothing* speaks *against* the assumption that Vedic literature extends back into the third millenary, and ancient Indian culture to the fourth millenary, while the supposition of 1200 or even 1500 B.C., traceable to Max Müller, for the commencement of the Vedic period no longer agrees with the *present-day* state of our knowledge of the political history, as well as of the literary and religious history of ancient India. This has, I believe, been convincingly proved, especially by G. Bühler.<sup>3</sup>

Inscriptions prove that in the third century B.C. Southern India was conquered by the Aryan Indians and invaded by brahmanical culture. The fact, however, that some Vedic schools, such as those of Baudhāyana and Āpastamba, originated in the south of India, makes it probable that the conquest of the south by the Aryans must have taken place much earlier, perhaps as early as in the 7th or 8th century B.C. For the whole country can hardly have been colonised and brahmanized immediately after the conquest to such an extent that Vedic schools could

<sup>1</sup> In the *Satapatha-Brahmana*, XII, 8,2,35, it is said: "All seasons are the first, all are the intermediate, all are the last."

<sup>2</sup> Professor Prey believes that Greenbridge 2001 and 2020, stars of the fifth to the sixth magnitude in the Little Bear, the first of which approached the pole as far as 17' in about 1250 B.C., and the second of which approached the pole as far as 8' in 1500 B.C., are easily visible in view of the favourable atmospheric conditions of India.

<sup>3</sup> *Ind. Ant.*, 23, 1894, pp. 245 ff.

originate in the distant south. But, as Bühler says,<sup>1</sup> "with the conquest of Southern India about 700 or even about 600 B.C., the assumption that the Indo-Aryans inhabited about 1200 or even about 1500 B.C. the northern corner of India and Eastern Afghanistan becomes absolutely impossible. The idea that the Indo-Aryan nation of the Vedic times, with its many clan-divisions and its perpetual internal feuds, should have conquered the 123,000 square miles, which form the area of India (excluding the Punjab, Assam and Burma) and should have founded States, organised on the same model, all over this vast territory within the space of five, six or even eight hundred years, appears simply ludicrous; especially if it is borne in mind that this territory was inhabited not merely by forest tribes, but in part by peoples possessing a civilisation not much inferior to that of the invaders. More than double of the longest period named was required for such achievements."

Now it could be said, and it has been said by Oldenberg, that seven hundred years are a good span of time, in which much can happen. "One should consider", says Oldenberg,<sup>2</sup> "what 400 years have meant for the enormous plains of Northern and Southern America." This, however, is a poor comparison. The races and civilizations which came into contact with one another in America were, after all, very different from those with which we have to deal in ancient India. As far as the political conditions of ancient India are concerned, we learn from some of the songs of the *Rgveda* and from the epics that, just as is shown by the later history of India, continuous fighting took place between the separate Aryan tribes in ancient and even the most ancient times. Under such circumstances the conquest of India could only proceed step by step, extremely slowly. Actually we see also, if we compare the two oldest strata of Indian literature with each other, that the advance of the Aryans towards the east and south proceeded only very slowly. In the hymns of the *Rgveda* we find the Indo-Aryan people still established exclusively in the extreme north-west of India, and in Eastern Afghanistan, and yet the period in which the hymns of the *Rgveda* originated, must

<sup>1</sup> *Ind Ant.*, 23, 1894, p. 247.

<sup>2</sup> *ZDMG.*, Vol. 49, p. 479

have stretched over centuries. That is proved by the many different strata of earlier and later parts, which we find in these hymns; it is proved, too, by the circumstance that the Ṛsis, who not only in the Anukramanīs, but already in the Brāhmaṇas, were *erroneously* called 'seers' or composers of the hymns, are in the hymns themselves regarded as seers of a remote antiquity.<sup>1</sup> The composers of the hymns, too, very often speak of 'old songs', of 'songs composed after the *old* manner', as though this poetry had been practised since time immemorial.<sup>2</sup> M. Bloomfield<sup>3</sup> has shown that, of the approximately 40,000 lines of the *R̥gveda*, nearly as many as 5,000 lines are repetitions. This proves that, at the time when the *R̥gveda* was composed, the more modern poets would frequently borrow lines and expressions from older ones, and that there was actually in existence a large number of floating lines of verse, which any singer could incorporate in his song if he so fancied. But we have repeatedly seen how far, after all, the *R̥gveda* lies behind all other literary works of the Veda. Even the language of the hymns is much more archaic than that of the Vedic prose works. The religious views and the conditions of civilization are quite different. The Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads pre-suppose not only the hymns of the *R̥gveda*, but also the spells and prayers of the other Saṃhitās as sacred texts of hoary age. Indeed, these old hymns and spells were often no longer understood. The old legends had fallen into oblivion. I will recall only the distance separating the Śunahśepa legend of the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa from the hymns of the *R̥gveda*.<sup>4</sup>

Oral tradition, too, pre-supposes longer intervals of time than would be necessary, had these texts been written down. Generations of pupils and teachers must have passed away before all the existing and the many lost texts had taken definite shape in

<sup>1</sup> S. e above pp. 49 f.

<sup>2</sup> See Ludwig, *Der R̥gveda*. III. pp. 120 f.

<sup>3</sup> *The Vedic Concordance*, HOS., Vol. 10, 1906; *R̥g-Veda Repetitions*, HOS., Vols. 20 and 21, 1916; JAOS., 29, 1908, 287 f; 31, 1910, 49 ff.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 49 p. 52, pp. 51 ff., pp. 59 f., p. 61, pp. 68 ff., p. 91, pp. 173 ff., pp. 188 f.



the Vedic schools.<sup>1</sup> On linguistic, literary and cultural grounds we must therefore assume that many centuries elapsed between the period of the earliest hymns and the final compilation of the hymns into a *Samhitā* or 'collection', for the *R̥gveda-Samhitā* after all denotes only the *close* of a period long past,<sup>2</sup> and again between the *R̥gveda-Samhitā* and the other *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*. The *Brāhmaṇas* themselves, with their numerous schools and branch schools, with their endless lists of teachers and the numerous references to teachers of antiquity, require a period of several centuries for their origin.<sup>3</sup> This literature itself, as well as the spread of brahmanical culture, theological knowledge, and not least, the priestly supremacy which went hand in hand with it, must have taken centuries. And when we come to the *Upaniṣads*, we see that they, too, belong to different periods of time, that they, too, pre-suppose generations of teachers and a long tradition.<sup>4</sup> Yet we see that, during the whole of this time, which lasted from the first beginnings till the last off-shoots of Vedic literature, the Indo-Aryan people conquered only the comparatively small stretch of land from the Indus as far as the Ganges, the actual Hindustan. If this advance from the extreme north-west over into the eastern Ganges-land already took so long, how many centuries must the conquest of the whole of Central and Southern India have taken! If we consider this, 700 years will no longer appear to us a great period of time.

There are other considerations besides this. It is indisputably to the credit of Max Müller to have shown that Buddhism at about 500 B.C. absolutely pre-supposes the existence of the whole of Vedic literature. In refutation of the view, held by

<sup>1</sup> The circumstance that the texts were written down when they were no longer completely understood and after a gap had occurred in the tradition, also explains the fact that so frequently passages of diverse contents and different periods occur in all Vedic texts, so that for instance, some *Upaniṣads* are to be found among the *Samhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas*. See above pp. 190, 103 ff., 197.

<sup>2</sup> The *Aitareya-Āraṇyaka* already pre-supposed the *R̥gveda-Samhitā* in its division into ten books (Max Müller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 310 f.).

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 194 f.

<sup>4</sup> See above, pp. 295 ff.

some scholars,<sup>1</sup> that the earliest Upaniṣads should not be placed prior to the 6th century B.C., Oldenberg<sup>2</sup> has shown that centuries must have elapsed between the earliest Upaniṣads and the earliest Buddhist literature. Buddhist literature, however, pre-supposes not only the Veda, but the Vedāṅgas also,<sup>3</sup> and indeed brahmanical literature and science in a highly developed state. To-day, too, more light has been thrown on the religious conditions of ancient India than was the case in Max Müller's day, when it was thought possible to squeeze the whole development of the religious history of India up to the appearance of Buddhism within the limit of 700 years. Even *before* the appearance of Buddhism, there were sects in India, as Bühler has pointed out, which denied the sanctity of the Veda. The tradition of one of these sects, the Jainas, has in other respects proved so reliable as to chronology, that we may regard with some confidence a report which places the life of the first founder of this sect about 750 B.C. Bühler also thought he could prove that other sects antagonistic to the Veda and to Brahmanism went back to a much more hoary antiquity than had hitherto been supposed.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately he did not live to demonstrate this proof.

The discoveries made by Hugo Winckler in Boghazköi in Asia Minor in the year 1907, gave an impetus to more recent discussions on the question of the age of the *Rgveda* and of Vedic culture.<sup>5</sup> The clay tablets from the archives of the capital of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hopkins, JAOS., 22 336 n.; Rapson, *Ancient India*, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Lehre der Upanishaden und die Anfänge des Buddhismus*, pp. 288, 357.

<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy that the Buddhists, too, call their didactic texts 'Sūtras'; although these are by no means composed in the 'Sūtra' style indicated above, on pp. 234 f. They took 'Sūtra' to mean 'didactic text'.

<sup>4</sup> R. Garbe, too (*Beiträge zur indischen Kulturgeschichte*, pp. 27 ff.), is inclined to date the origin of the sect of the Bhāgavatas or Pāṇicarātras back to pre-Buddhist times.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ed. Meyer, SBA., 1908 pp. 14 ff.; *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft*, 42, 1909, pp. 1 ff.; *Geschichte des Altertums*, 2. Aufl., 1, 2 (1909), §§ 551, 574; H. Jacobi, JRAS., 1909, 721 ff.; 1910, 456 ff.; *Internat. Wochenschrift*, 5, 1911, 387; A. B. Keith, JRAS., 1909, 1100 ff.; 1910, 464 ff.; *Bhandarkar Com. Vol.*, pp. 81 ff. and HOS., Vol. 18 Introd. (where the whole development of Vedic literature is crammed in between 1200 and 350 B.C., s. esp. pp. clxv f.); A. A. Macdonell in *Vedic Index I*, pp. viii f and ERE., 7, 1914, pp. 49 ff.; H. Oldenberg, JRAS., 1909, pp. 1095 ff.; 1910, pp. 846 ff.; L. de la Vallée Poussin, *Le Védisme*, 3 ième ed. Paris. 1909. pp. 29 f.; Winternitz, *Oesterreichische Monatschrift für den Orient*, 41, 1915, pp. 168 ff.; *Calcutta*

the ancient Hittite kingdom, which were found in Boghazköi, included records of treaties concluded by the king of the Hittites and the king of Mitani at the beginning of the 14th century B.C. The gods of both kingdoms are invoked as guardians of the treaties, and in the list of gods there appear, beside numerous Babylonian and Hittite deities, the names of Mitra, Varuna, Indra and Nāsatyau among the gods of Mitani.<sup>1</sup> How did the names of these deities reach the Mitanis in Asia Minor? Scholars diverge greatly in their reply to this question. The historian Ed. Meyer ascribes these gods to the Aryan period, i.e., the period when the Indians and Iranians as yet formed an undivided nation in language and religion<sup>2</sup>; and he assumes that, at the same time as these 'Aryans' appeared in western Mesopotamia and Syria, the separate development of the Aryans in north-western India had already begun: the Vedic hymns, the earliest of which arose 'probably not later than about 1500 B.C.' bearing witness to this development. A similar opinion has been expressed by P. Giles. Oldenberg<sup>3</sup> thinks it more likely "that these are the gods of some western Aryan tribe akin to the Indians, inherited from some common past, as the Indians on their part had inherited them from the same source". He leaves the question open whether these were Iranians before Zoroaster's time, or whether a third branch of the Aryans is meant, and takes the view that this discovery does not justify us in assuming greater antiquity for the Veda.

*Review*, Nov., 1923, pp. 119 ff.; Sten Konow, *The Aryan Gods of the Mitani People* ('Royal Frederik University Publications of the Indian Institute', Kristiania, 1921); F. E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, London, 1922, pp. 300 ff.; P. Giles, *Cambridge History of India*, I, pp. 72 f.

<sup>1</sup> At least, nearly all scholars agree with Winckler (*Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient Gesellschaft* No. 35, 1907, p. 51, s. *Boghazköi-Studien*, VIII, Leipzig, 1923, pp. 32 f., 54 f.) that these names of gods have to be recognised in the following cuneiform text: ilāni Mi-it-ra aš-ši-il ilāni U-ru-wa-na-aš-ši-el (in another text. A-ru-na--aš-ši-il) In-da-ra (other text: In-da-ra) ilāni Na-ša-at-ti-ya-an-na. Doubts against this identification have only been raised by J. Halévy in *Revue Semitique*, 16, 1908, pp. 247 ff.

<sup>2</sup> H. Winckler (*Orientalist. Literaturzeitung*, 13, 1910, 289 ff.; *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft* 18, 1913, H. 4, pp. 75 ff.) even thinks that the *Harri* who in the inscriptions are mentioned as the ruling class in Mitani are identical with these very 'Aryans'. But this is quite uncertain. Cf. A. H. Sayce, *JRAS.*, 1909, pp. 1106 f.

<sup>3</sup> NIGW, *Geschäftliche Mitteilungen*, 1918, p. 91.

It is a fact, however, that this particular grouping of the gods Varuṇa and Mitra, Indra and Nāsatyau, with these forms of their names, can be traced *only in the Veda*. For this reason I agree with Jacobi, Konow and Hillebrandt in considering these gods to be *Indian, Vedic* deities and that there is no possible justification for any other view. We shall have to assume that, just as there were Aryan immigrations into India from the west, there must have been isolated migrations back to the west. We may think either of warlike adventurers or of connections by marriage. Nor should we forget that, at the time of the *R̥gveda*, the Aryan Indians were as yet much nearer the west from the geographical point of view.<sup>1</sup> As regards chronology, however, all that we can glean from the inscriptions at Boghazköi is that, about the middle of the second millenary B.C. Aryan tribes which worshipped Vedic gods must already have been established in north-western India for a very considerable time, as several of these tribes had migrated far back to the west as early as about 1400 B.C.<sup>2</sup> This small but important fact would be supported

<sup>1</sup> See A. Hillebrandt, *Aus Alt-und Neuindien*, Breslau, 1922, pp. 1 ff. and ZII., 8, 1924, pp. 1 ff. who points out traces of relations to Western countries especially in the eighth Book of the *R̥gveda*. For other views about the Aryan Indians in Asia Minor s. R. G. Bhandarkar, JBRAS., 25, 1918, pp. 76 ff., and E. Forrer, *Die acht Sprachen der Boghazköi Inschriften*, SBA., 1919, pp. 1036 f.

<sup>2</sup> Konow suggests that the Nāsatyas are mentioned in the Mitani treaty on account of their playing a role in the ancient marriage-rites, because the treaty, following upon a war between the Hittite king Subbiluliuma and the Mitani king Mattiuza, was confirmed by a marriage of the latter with the Hittite king's daughter. As this connection of the Aśvins with the marriage-ritual, however, occurs only in the late Sūryāsūkta, Konow concludes "that the extension of Indo-Aryan civilization into Mesopotamia took place after the bulk of the *R̥gveda* had come into existence", so that the oldest portions of the collection would have to be considered as considerably elder than the Mitani treaty. I cannot see the force of this argument, as Indra and the Nāsatyau (Indranāsatyā) are invoked together in *Rv.* VIII, 26, 8, where they have nothing to do with marriage. K. Chaṭṭopādhyāya (*Calcutta Review*, May 1924, pp. 287 ff.) concludes from the mention of Vedic gods in the Boghazköi treaties that between 2000 and 1500 B.C. there were several arrivals of Aryan peoples in Asia Minor at the same time when other Aryan tribes entered India from Central Asia and became known as Vrātyas. This chronological combination of the Vrātyas with the Indians in Asia Minor has no foundation in fact whatsoever, hence Mr. Chaṭṭopādhyāya's chronological conclusions (Brāhmaṇa period from 2000 B.C. to 1400 B.C., *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda* about 2000 B.C. and *R̥gveda* before 3,000 B.C.) are quite unfounded.

still further, if it should prove to be true that also traces of Indian numerals are to be found in the Boghazköi texts.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of so early a date as the third millenary B.C. for the Veda would certainly be out of the question, if it were proved that the individual Indo-European peoples had not yet separated from the primitive Indo-Europeans in the third millenary.<sup>2</sup> This view which, in my opinion, is very unlikely and has not been satisfactorily proved, is welcomed by those who wish to assign as low a date as possible to the *Rgveda* and to the beginnings of Indian culture. Thus J. Hertel<sup>3</sup> promises to demonstrate that the *Rgveda* originated, not in north-western India but in Iran, and at a time not far distant from that of Zoroaster, who, according to Hertel, lived about 500 B.C. G. Hüsing<sup>4</sup> goes still further, and turns and twists certain of the names of kings occurring in the cuneiform inscriptions so long that they are metamorphosed into those of Indian kings. On the basis of these 'facts', he then concludes that from about 1000 B.C. the Indians wandered from Armenia to Afghanistan, which was the scene of the *Rgvedic* period, and that it was only later that they were driven further towards India. Following a suggestion of H. Brunnhofer, he even assumes that the king Kānīta Prthuśravas<sup>5</sup> who is mentioned

<sup>1</sup> Cf. P. Jensen, *Indische Zahlwörter in Keilschrift-hittitischen Texten*, SBA., 1919, pp. 367 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Gunther Ipsen (*Indogerman. Forschungen*, 41, 1923, pp. 174 ff.: *Stand und Aufgaben der Sprachwissenschaft, Festschrift für W. Streitberg*, Heidelberg, 1924, pp. 200 ff.) endeavours to prove that the Indo-European words for 'copper', 'cow' and 'star' were borrowed from the Sumerian, and not earlier than between 3000 and 2100 B.C. However, when we consider that the domestic cow and copper are among the most ancient of pre-historic finds, we shall hesitate to accept Ipsen's theory.

<sup>3</sup> *Indogerman. Forschungen*, 41, 1923, p. 188; *Die Zeit Zoroasters*, Leipzig, 1924; *Die Himmelstiere im Veda und im Avesta*, Leipzig, 1924, pp. 7 f. A book by Hertel on the age and home of the *Rgveda* is announced, but has not yet been published. Zoroaster's date is still uncertain, but there are good reasons for placing him about 1000 B.C. See C. Clemen, *Die griechischen und lateinischen Nachrichten über die persische Religion*, Giessen, 1920, pp. 11 ff.; H. Reischolt in *Festschrift für W. Streitberg*, pp. 282 f.

<sup>4</sup> *Die Inder in Boghazköi*, in *Prace lingwistyczne ofiarowane Janowi Baudouinowi de Courtenay*...Krakow 1931, pp. 151 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. VIII, 46, 21; 24. The story of this King Prthuśravas is one of the old tales which, like the Ākhyāna of Śunahśepa, were recited at the Puruṣamedha, s. *Sāṅkhya-Srautasūtra*, XVI, II, 23.

in the *Rgveda* is identical with a Scythian king Kanitas who is mentioned in a Greek inscription and on a coin, and who lived in the 2nd century B.C. This would mean "that the collection of these songs was not yet completed in the 2nd century B.C." This must surely be the very latest date ever yet assumed as that of the *Rgveda*!

The strongest argument for a later dating of the Veda is undoubtedly the close relationship between the Veda and the Avesta with regard to language and religious views.<sup>1</sup> There are, however, very great differences to counteract the points of agreement in religion. Moreover, the points of agreement can easily be explained, considering firstly that Indians and Iranians once formed one Aryan cultural unit at a pre-Vedic and pre-Avestic period, and secondly that they remained neighbours even after the separation. As regards the kinship of the languages, it is quite impossible to state definite chronological limits within which languages change. Some languages change very rapidly, others remain more or less unaltered for a long period.<sup>2</sup> It is true that hieratic languages, like those of the Vedic hymns and the Avesta, can remain unaltered much longer than spoken vernaculars.

Nevertheless, all that we know of the history of other languages and branches of languages compels us to say that languages do not remain unchanged for an indefinite number of millenaries, let alone tens of thousands of years. For this reason, the fantastic figures of 16000 or even 25000 B.C.<sup>3</sup> as the date of the Veda, built up on the basis of astronomical or geological speculations, are absolutely impossible. Figures like this imply, too that scarcely any cultural progress worthy

<sup>1</sup> Thus A. A. Macdonell (ERE., Vol. 7, 1914 pp. 49 ff.) says, that "it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Indians cannot have separated from the Iranians much earlier than about 1800 B.C."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. C. Woolner (Proc. IOC, I, pp. xvii ff.; II, p. 20 ff.) who rightly says "that as far as any philological estimates go, 2000 B.C. remains quite as possible as 1200 B.C. for the earliest Mantra." See also B. V. Kamesvara Aiyar, *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, XII, 1, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> I am thinking of Abinash Chandra Das, *Rigvedic India*, I, Calcutta, 1921 (s. also *Calcutta Review*, March 1924, pp. 540 ff.) and D. N. Mukhopadhyaya, *The Hindu Nakshatras* (reprinted from Vol. VI of *Journal of the Department of Science*, Calcutta University, 1923).

of the name was made in the whole course of that overwhelmingly long acon, which would be most surprising in the case of so talented a race as the Indians. These figures are impossible, too, because the continuity between the Vedic and the later brahmanical culture which cannot be explained away especially as regards religion, would then become utterly inexplicable. Moreover, classical Sanskrit, as fixed by Pāṇini in his Grammar more especially on the basis of the language of the Brāhmaṇas which still formed part of the Veda proper, and again the language of the inscriptions of King Aśoka in the third century B.C., show too close a relationship with the language of the Veda for it to be feasible that a stretch of so very many thousands of years lay between.

In summing up, we may say :

1. Attempts to determine the period of the Veda by the aid of *astronomy* come to grief owing to the fact that there are certain passages in the Vedic texts which admit of various interpretations. However correct the astronomical calculations may be, they prove nothing unless the texts in question admit of an unambiguous interpretation.

2. The *historical* facts and hypotheses, such as the mention of Vedic gods in the cuneiform inscriptions, and the relationship of Vedic antiquity to the Aryan (Indo-Iranian) and Indo-European period, are so uncertain in themselves that the most divergent and contradictory conclusions have been drawn from them. Nevertheless, we have now such likely evidence of relations between ancient India and western Asia penetrating as far west as Asia Minor in the second millenary B.C., that Vedic culture can be traced back *at least* to the second millenary B.C.

3. The *linguistic* facts, the near relationship between the language of the Veda and that of the Avesta on the one hand, and between the Vedic language and classical Sanskrit on the other, do not yield any positive results.

4. They serve as a warning to us, however, to refrain from dating the Veda back to an inconceivably distant period on the strength of astronomical or *geological* speculations.

5. As all the external evidence fails, we are compelled to rely on *the evidence arising out of the history of Indian literature*

*itself*, for the age of the Veda. The surest evidence in this respect is still the fact that Pārśva, Mahāvīra and Buddha pre-suppose the entire Veda as a literature to all intents and purposes completed, and this is a limit which we must not exceed. We cannot, however, explain the development of the whole of this great literature, if we assume as late a date as round about 1200 or 1500 B.C. as its starting-point. We shall probably have to date the beginning of this development about 2000 or 2500 B.C., and the end of it between 750 and 500 B.C. The more prudent course, however, is to steer clear of any fixed dates, and to guard against the extremes of a stupendously ancient period or a ludicrously modern epoch.

















